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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the attached periodic report covering the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996, which was submitted to him, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of Assembly resolution 50/29 A of 6 December 1995, by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

30 June 1996

Sir,

The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has the honour to transmit to you herewith, in accordance with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 50/29 A of 6 December 1995, a periodic report updating information contained in the twenty-eighth periodic report, which it adopted and presented to you on 29 February 1996 (A/51/99). The present periodic report has been prepared in order to bring to your attention, and to the attention of the General Assembly, updated information on the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The present periodic report covers the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996. It is based on written information gathered from various sources among which the Special Committee has selected relevant excerpts and summaries, which are reflected in the report.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Herman Leonard de SILVA
Chairman of the Special Committee to
Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting
the Human Rights of the Palestinian
People and Other Arabs of the
Occupied Territories

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 50/29 A of 6 December 1995, the General Assembly:

"5. Requests the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;

"6. Also requests the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory;

"7. Further requests the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967".

2. The Special Committee continued its work under the rules of procedure contained in its first report to the Secretary-General and held the second of its series of meetings from 20 to 30 June 1996 at Geneva, Cairo, Amman and Damascus. Mr. Herman Leonard de Silva (Sri Lanka) continued to be Chairman. The meetings were also attended by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) and Dato' Abdul Majid Mohamed (Malaysia).

3. Section II of the present report describes the situation in the Arab territories occupied by Israel as it affects the human rights of the civilian population. The information contained in the report reflects written information received by the Special Committee during the period from 1 January to 31 March 1996. The Special Committee has followed the situation in the occupied territories on a day-to-day basis through reports appearing in the Israeli press and in the Arab-language newspapers published in the occupied territories. It has also examined a number of communications and reports from Governments, organizations and individuals pertaining to the period covered by the report.

4. The geographical names and the terminology employed in the present report reflect the usage in the original sources and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Special Committee or the Secretariat of the United Nations.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

A. General situation

1. General developments and policy statements

5. On 1 January, 330 Palestinian workers who were staying in Israel illegally were detained during a special police operation in the Petah Tikva area. The Palestinians who were caught staying in Israel illegally for the first time were handed over to the Kalkiliya Coordination and Liaison Office, while those who had previously committed a similar offence were placed under arrest and were to be indicted in speedy trial procedures. In addition, files were opened against 19 vehicle owners who had transported Palestinians across the Green Line without the necessary permit. Heavy fines were imposed on Israeli employers of illegal workers. A bus that had carried illegal workers was confiscated. (Ha'aretz, 2 January)

6. On 1 January, Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that Israel should not be responsible for the damages suffered by Arab residents of the territories as a result of the intifadah since they stemmed from what he described as acts of war against Israel. Mr. Peres explained that just as Israel made compensation for all damages incurred by the Jewish victims of the intifadah, the Palestinian Authority should take care of claims by Arabs. However, Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair rejected such argumentation on the grounds that it might not be upheld by the High Court of Justice. Mr. Ben-Yair stated that since Israel had controlled the territories for almost three decades, it could not shun responsibility for what had occurred there. In addition, he indicated that Israel could not retroactively deny the plaintiffs' right to sue. Nevertheless, he agreed with the Prime Minister that Palestinians who suffered damages as a result of their direct involvement in intifadah-related activities should not be compensated. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 2 January)

7. On 1 January, the Palestinian Minister of Justice, Freih Abu Middein, accused Israel of treating political prisoners as hostages when commenting on the possibility of a partial release of prisoners. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

8. On 2 January, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Central Election Commission announced the beginning of the electoral campaign, which, in accordance with the Election Law, was scheduled to begin 22 days before the holding of the legislative elections. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

9. On 3 January, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that Arabs who had suffered injuries during the intifadah would not be able to sue for damages in court. However, he agreed to a compromise whereby a special committee would be set up to discuss compensation requests by innocent victims, that is, Palestinians who were not directly involved in intifadah-related activities and who would be entitled to compensation on a "humanitarian basis". It was reported that by withdrawing the issue from the courts, compensation payments were likely to be reduced significantly since the Special Committee was expected to follow the guidelines set out in Israeli laws such as the Law for the Compensation of Victims of Enemy Action, which limited the amount of maximum

compensation and did not provide payment for pain and suffering. According to Minister of Justice David Liba'i, the decision would prevent the filing of compensation claims in the order of $700 million. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 January)

10. On 4 January, six civil rights organizations indicated that they would petition the High Court of Justice if the Government were to pass a bill preventing the filing of lawsuits by Arabs who had suffered damages from the Israeli security forces during the intifadah. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), B'tselem, the Centre for the Defence of the Individual, Physicians for Human Rights, Defence for Children International and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel stated that the passing of such a law would represent a gross violation of human rights. Attorney Eliahu Abram of ACRI noted that Israeli courts had repeatedly acknowledged the right of Arab residents of the territories to sue for intifadah-related damages and had been hearing such cases for years. He stated that to deny that right retroactively would raise serious constitutional problems. In addition, he indicated that the administrative committee that the Government had proposed to set up in order to decide about compensation requests was not appropriate since it would not be completely independent from the Government and would award compensation only as an act of charity rather than as accruing from rights. Attorney Leah Tsemel from the Public Committee against Torture in Israel pointed out that Israeli courts did not rule in favour of plaintiffs in cases of insufficient evidence, in cases where the security forces had been acting legally or when the plaintiff was involved in intifadah-related activities. She concluded that the Government would have no reason to take the compensation suits out of the courts unless it wished to deny compensation in cases where it was due. Attorney Badera Khoury from the Centre for the Defence of the Individual reported that her organization had so far successfully argued before the Defence Ministry that compensation was due in 57 out of the 77 complaints it had filed out of court. She stated, however, that the amounts awarded by the Ministry were often exceedingly low, as in the case when new Israeli shekels (NIS) 20,000 were offered as compensation for the death of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy. She also stated that numerous investigations were initiated only long after the incidents had occurred, lasted an unreasonable amount of time and ignored the testimony received from Palestinian witnesses. (Jerusalem Post, 5 January)

11. On 5 January, it was reported that Israel had decided to reject Palestinian applications for compensation for physical harm and material damage caused by the Israeli authorities during the intifadah. The Israeli daily Ha'aretz, which had reported the news on 2 January, added that the measure included land confiscation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

12. On 7 January, the Higher Council of the Fatah officially abolished the strikes held on the ninth day of every month to commemorate the beginning of the intifadah. (The Jerusalem Times, 12 January)

13. On 14 January, the General Security Service (GSS) revealed that it had destroyed a Hamas cell in Kalkiliya and arrested two of its members. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 15 January)

14. On 14 January, the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories, Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor, stated that the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) would not leave the "Arab areas of Hebron" during the upcoming Palestinian elections but would try to stay away from polling stations. (Jerusalem Post, 15 January)

15. On 17 January, security sources reported that at least two Hamas and Islamic Jihad cells had been created recently and were operating in the West Bank. The cells were reportedly created after the GSS had managed to inflict serious blows to the infrastructure of extremist movements in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 17 January)

16. On 17 January, the Israeli army redeployed from Abu Dis, a village located on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem. This completed the redeployment process from Palestinian cities and villages with the exception of Hebron. (The Jerusalem Times, 19 January)

17. On 20 January, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that all the members of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) would be allowed to enter the autonomous areas for discussion of the amendments to the Palestinian Covenant. (Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

18. On 20 January, Yasser Arafat was elected President of the Palestinian Authority with 88 per cent of the votes. The preliminary results showed that Fatah had won 59 seats on the Council, which represented 70 per cent of the total number of seats, followed by the independent candidates who won 18 seats. The Islamic candidates won four seats. Three seats went to other small parties. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

19. On 21 and 22 January, it was reported that Yasser Arafat and his Fatah movement had won a landslide victory in the elections for the PNC held on 20 January. Yasser Arafat won 88.1 per cent of the vote while the Fatah movement won 67 seats on the 88-member Council. Election observers called the vote a success despite numerous irregularities. Carl Libdom, the head of a 650-man observer team that included representatives from the European Union (EU), China, the Russian Federation and Canada reported that early estimates showed that approximately 75 per cent of eligible voters had participated in the elections. The figure did not refer, however, to East Jerusalem and Hebron, where the turnout was relatively low. (Ha'aretz, 21, 22 January; Jerusalem Post, 21, 22 and 23 January)

20. On 22 January, the Ministerial Committee on the GSS extended by an additional three months the authorization given to GSS interrogators to use "special" measures, including "moderate physical pressure", during the interrogation of Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists. Some 1,400 Hamas activists are said to have been interrogated in GSS facilities over the previous year. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 January)

21. On 24 January, it was announced that stringent new guidelines for the distribution of IDF weapons to civilians would enter into force on 1 March. All civilians in possession of IDF weapons in Israel and in the territories would be required to return their weapons and undergo examinations to determine whether

they could receive weapon licences in the future. The criteria for obtaining a licence would include having a clean mental and physical health record, having no criminal record and having served in the IDF. A senior military source stated that the procedure of reissuing weapons was expected to last several weeks and that numerous applicants would not receive firearms in the future. (Jerusalem Post, 24 January)

22. On 24 January, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that Israel would complete redeployment in Hebron by May. In his first meeting with Yasser Arafat after the Palestinian elections, Peres stated that he would issue 3,000 additional work permits to Palestinian labourers. Peres added that Israel would not annex any more land. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

23. On 30 January, the Israeli authorities blocked 250 members of the Palestinian forces from arriving in the Gaza Strip from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya because two of the men among them were on Israel's wanted list. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

24. On 5 February, Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu declared that if he were elected Prime Minister, he would not personally meet or deal with Yasser Arafat. Mr. Netanyahu also announced that he would close Orient House in East Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post, 6 February)

25. On 5 and 6 February, the IDF arrested members of the Fatah and the Islamic Jihad in areas of Jenin under Palestinian control. House furniture was destroyed during the arrests. (The Jerusalem Times, 9 February)

26. On 11 February, the Palestinian-Israeli Security Committee met in an emergency session to discuss the dispute over Israeli efforts to introduce changes in the area around Rachel's Tomb at the entrance to Bethlehem. Two months ago, Israel had begun constructing a 20-metre-long, 3-metre-high wall around the cemetery. (The Jerusalem Times, 16 February)

27. On 12 February, Yasser Arafat was sworn in as the first elected President of Palestine at the Legislative Council headquarters in Gaza. (The Jerusalem Times, 16 February)

28. On 15 February, it was reported that the Israeli police would soon open their first station in the Arab sector of East Jerusalem in order to improve services to Arab residents and to fight more efficiently the attempted infiltration of the PNA security agents into the City. Police sources announced that the station would be opened in the main post office building on Salah A-Din Street, which is located in the heart of the Arab business district in East Jerusalem. The sources also stated that if the station proved to be a success, additional police stations would probably be set up in East Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post, 15 February)

29. On 15 February, the Al-Hayat newspaper reported that several Palestinian public figures were currently setting up a new body that would work for the preservation of the Arab character of Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 16 February)

30. On 16 February, it was reported that Prime Minister Shimon Peres had agreed to a demand by the Israeli Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak concerning the building of five additional circular roads throughout the West Bank. According to Shahak, the roads would allow the Israeli army to continue its redeployment procedures. The new circular roads were to be built to the west of Beitunia in the Ramallah area; near the Hatse Shomron settlement at Nablus; near Halhul, to be linked to a road being built east of Halhul; a fourth, around Shamu', in the Hebron area; and the fifth would be in an as yet undetermined location. Khalil Tufakji, a Palestinian expert on settlements, described Peres' decision as another attempt to lock in Palestinian cities. (The Jerusalem Times, 16 February)

31. On 16 February, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Salah Tamari, announced that Israel had agreed to remove the wall built around Rachel's Tomb at the entrance to Bethlehem. Tamari pointed out that the Oslo II Accords did not give Israel the right to build in the area. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

32. On 18 February, the IDF denied allegations by Amnesty International that it had illegally executed Palestinians. In a report issued on 5 February, the London-based human rights organization had claimed that 150 Palestinians had been killed by the Israeli security forces since the Israel-PLO accord was signed in May 1994. The report stated that many were killed in circumstances suggesting that they were victims of extrajudicial executions. In addition, the report accused Israel and the Palestinian Authority of torture and arresting suspects without charges. In a statement commenting on the report, Lt.-Col. Sharon Grinker dismissed the allegations as baseless, claiming that the army and the security forces had maintained the rule of law in areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under Israeli control. He also claimed that the open-fire regulations were being enforced to the letter by the military legal system and that the necessary legal steps were taken against those who violated them. Grinker added that the army used roadblocks, curfews and other measures in its war against "terrorist cells" and that these measures had been taken after being carefully considered and with a view to causing minimal disruption of the daily life of the residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The statement also disputed Amnesty's casualty toll, which claimed that 92 Palestinians had been killed by the IDF. (Jerusalem Post, 19 February)

33. On 18 and 20 February, it was reported that the security authorities had given permission to 103 members of the Palestinian National Council to enter the autonomous areas at any time. The members were part of a list of 193 Council members transmitted to Israel by the PNA. Israel claimed that some details in the list were missing and required the Palestinians to complete them. A security source indicated, however, that all PNC members, including leaders such as George Habash, were authorized to enter the autonomous areas. The decision had been reached in order to allow the Council to convene in Gaza in order to discuss the amendment of the articles in the Palestinian Charter that called for the destruction of Israel. (Ha'aretz, 18 and 20 February)

34. On 19 February, the Secretary-General of the PLO Executive Committee, Jamal A-Surani, announced that the Committee would open permanent offices in Gaza, which would operate in conjunction with the Executive Committee's offices

in Tunis. In a related development, it was reported that the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) intended to move its headquarters from Damascus to the autonomous areas as soon as its leadership was allowed to enter the autonomous areas. Some of the organization's leaders were included in the list of Palestinian National Council members that Israel had allowed to enter the territories. (Ha'aretz, 20 February)

35. On 20 February, the Knesset agreed to bring forward the Israeli elections to 29 May. (Jerusalem Post, 21 February)

36. On 22 February, Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that Israel would achieve a comprehensive peace with all Arab countries over the next four years. In a meeting with Muslim leaders in Kalansuwa to mark Id al-Fitr, Mr. Peres stated that Israel was very serious about peace with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. He also argued that no Arab country had done as much for the Palestinian people as Israel. (Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

37. On 23 February, it was reported that the Israeli Minister of Internal Security had decided to prohibit visits by foreign ministers to Orient House in Jerusalem. Sources in the Ministry confirmed that a police station at the Salah A-Din Street post office in East Jerusalem was to be opened within two months. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

38. On 26 February, PNA security officials arrested more than 250 Hamas activists in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank for questioning concerning the bus bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. President Yasser Arafat condemned the bus bombings, which he described as terrorist attacks. President Arafat also stressed that Jewish extremists had helped the Palestinian suicide bombers. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

39. On 27 February, the Izz al-din al-Qassam brigades, the military wing of Hamas, formally denied that Hamas had had any connection with the suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

40. On 29 February, Israel imposed a total closure on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. New conditions would be imposed for persons trying to reach the City of Jerusalem and the areas inside the Green Line. These measures included a threat to treat all persons trying to avoid official entrances into Jerusalem as "terrorists". The Israeli authorities also obstructed the free movement of PNA ministers, refusing to allow them to enter or leave the Gaza Strip. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

41. On 1 March, it was reported that Israel had approved the return of 18 members of the PNC residing in Jordan. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

42. On 1 March, it was reported that the Palestinian Water and Land Research Institute had recently launched a campaign to gather information on Palestinian property in West Jerusalem through research of documents and papers collected. The data thus gathered should provide evidence of more than 1,000 leases in the area. The Institute commissioned a special photographic unit to document sites where Palestinian houses and homes had stood where attempts were made to obliterate the Palestinian identity through renovation and restoration. In a

related development, several Palestinians initiated legal proceedings to regain the property of land on which the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, had been built. The Knesset was built on land belonging to the village of Sheikh Badr whose owners were forced to flee during the 1948 war. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

43. On 2 March, Prime Minister Shimon Peres rejected a ceasefire offer from Hamas to halt attacks on civilians on condition that Israel agree to stop "organized terrorism against Hamas and its al-Qassam brigades, to stop aggression against Palestinian civilians in the occupied lands and to release all Hamas prisoners". The Hamas movement announced that unless Israel responded favourably to the offer, the brigades would be free to take any military action against anyone in the Jewish State. Mr. Peres told PNA President Yasser Arafat to crack down harder on "terrorists". (Jerusalem Post, 3 March)

44. On 3 March, the Cabinet approved a series of measures to combat "terrorism" following a suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem. Among other things, it was decided to take action against the suicide bombers' families and places of residence. The Cabinet also adopted the Interior Minister's separation plan for which NIS 247 million was scheduled to be earmarked over the next two years. Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that in addition to the sealing and demolition of houses and the imposition of curfews, the expulsion of suicide bombers' family members would also be considered. He also demanded that the PNA outlaw "terrorist" organizations, including the military wing of Hamas, disarm "terrorists" and detain suspected heads of "terrorist" organizations. (Ha'aretz, 4 March)

45. On 3 March, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert presented the Prime Minister with a list of Hamas-affiliated organizations to be closed in Jerusalem on the grounds that they were being used by Hamas to increase Palestinian public support for the movement. The list included the Central Islamic Welfare Organization, the Islamic Science and Technology Association and the Islamic Religion Faculty of Al-Quds University. (Jerusalem Post, 5 March)

46. On 4 March, the Cabinet held an emergency meeting in the immediate aftermath of a suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv in which 12 or 13 civilians were killed and 109 wounded. The Cabinet decided to set up a Special Staff to fight "terrorism" by suicide bombers. The Special Staff, chaired by the head of the GSS, would be authorized to take a number of measures: arrests of male family members of suicide bombers; the imposition of curfews and the sealing off of the villages where the suicide bombers used to live; the closure of Hamas-affiliated institutions in Jerusalem, including schools, charitable organizations and newspapers; the sealing and demolition of suicide bombers' family homes and the administrative detention of the sympathizers and supporters of suicide bombers. Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that the Special Staff would be provided with all the necessary means to accomplish its task and would be authorized to operate everywhere in order to strike at Hamas and Islamic Jihad members. Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet specified later that the IDF now claimed the right to operate in "A" areas, which include the main West Bank towns and much of the Gaza Strip under the control of the PNA. Several ministers suggested that the Government take harsher measures such as a military operation in the Gaza Strip or destroying entire streets in the

villages where suicide bombers used to live. The Prime Minister rejected the proposals on the grounds that extensive retaliatory action would not be helpful in the war against suicide bombers, which required a targeted action. Responding to the question whether the Cabinet's decisions did not jeopardize the Oslo Accords, Mr. Peres stated that the Accords did not prohibit Israel from defending itself. He also indicated that Israel would not take any further steps towards the implementation of the Accords, including the withdrawal from Hebron, before the Palestinian Charter was amended. (Ha'aretz, 5 March; Jerusalem Post, 5 and 6 March)

47. On 5 March, the IDF launched an exhaustive and intensive hunt for Muslim extremists, rounding up more than 100 Hamas activists in the West Bank, sealing the homes of suspected "terrorists" and closing Hamas-affiliated institutions. OC Central Command stated that more arrests were expected. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 March)

48. On 6 March, security officials reported that the GSS and the police had uncovered the Hamas terror cell responsible for three of the four recent suicide bombings and which reportedly operated from the United Nations-run Teachers' Training College in Ramallah. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 7 March)

49. On 6 March, it was reported that at least 200 illegal Palestinian workers from the territories had been arrested in Israel over the previous days. (Ha'aretz, 6 March)

50. On 6 March, the Izz al-din al-Qassam units, the military wing of Hamas, issued a statement declaring that it would surrender all its weapons and explosives to the PNA. A day earlier, the al-Qassam units had announced that they would heed the call of the Hamas political wing to halt military attacks against Israelis, if Israel promised not to arrest prominent figures from Hamas. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

51. On 7 March, it was reported that over the previous three days the IDF had detained some 200 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 7 March)

52. On 7 March, the 88-member PNC, which was elected in January, convened for the first time in Gaza and elected the chief Palestinian negotiator of the Oslo Accords, Ahmad Qureia, as the assembly's president. All 88 members arrived at the opening session after delegates residing in the West Bank received permission from the IDF to attend the session despite the closure of the occupied territories. However, numerous delegates are said to have been kept waiting for four hours before being allowed into Gaza. During his opening speech, PNA President Yasser Arafat expressed his gratitude to all the counties and people who had stood behind the peace process and condemned the recent attacks in Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv. He indicated, however, that the problem of terror could not be solved by closures and collective punishment directed against the Palestinian people, which were jeopardizing all that had been achieved so far. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 8 March)

53. On 8 March, it was reported that Prime Minister Shimon Peres had pledged to wage a total war against Hamas following a series of suicide bombings in

Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv. Peres also announced the implementation of new preventive security measures. Israel imposed a state of siege around the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, cutting off movement between 465 Palestinian cities and villages. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

54. On 8 and 9 March, the IDF rounded up some 50 Hamas activists in the isolated village of Anza, near Jenin. All male residents were ordered to gather in a school yard and those with suspected links to Hamas were taken for interrogation. The IDF also found weapons and inflammatory material during searches of houses. In another development, the Duvdevan undercover unit arrested at least five Islamic militants during several ambushes along the Green Line and deep inside the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 10 March)

55. On 9 March, the Izz al-din al-Qassam units issued a statement declaring an all-out war against Israel. The statement indicated that the decision to resume their operations was prompted by the PNA and Israel arrest campaign against Hamas. On 8 March, a number of Hamas political leaders were arrested, among them Mahmoud Zahhar, the Hamas leader in charge of negotiations with the PNA. Other reasons cited for the decision taken by al-Qassam included Israel's intention to expel the Ayyash family and close relatives of the suicide bombers as well as its closure of Islamic institutions. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

56. On 10 March, the Officer Commanding (OC) Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran, confirmed that plans to redeploy IDF forces from Hebron had been suspended because of the recent "terrorist" attacks. (Ha'aretz, 10 March; Jerusalem Post, 11 March)

57. On 10 March, the Israeli authorities resumed construction work on the wall that they had set up around the site of Rachel's Tomb, at the entrance to Bethlehem. Work on the wall had been suspended two weeks earlier. In a separate development, for the first time in 29 years, an Israeli police station was opened in the building of the main post office in East Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

58. On 11 March, the IDF arrested 29 Hamas activists during pre-dawn raids in Palestinian villages throughout Judea and Samaria (West Bank). This brought to 300 the number of persons arrested since the beginning of the crackdown. Firearms and inflammatory material were found during the raids. A battalion commander whose forces had arrested more than a dozen Hamas suspects near Bethlehem stated that their mission was to apprehend Hamas activists wherever they were in Judea and Samaria. The Commander also indicated that the operation had only started. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 March)

59. On 11 March, it was reported that Prime Minister Shimon Peres authorized the bringing of 16,500 foreign workers to Israel. This would raise to 90,000 the number of foreign workers in Israel. However, according to Interior Ministry data, an additional 100,000 foreigners worked in Israel illegally. (Ha'aretz, 11 March)

60. On 11 March, an official of the Palestinian police stated that the PNA had arrested 800 Palestinians suspected of having ties or contacts with the Hamas movement or the Islamic Jihad. The official also announced the discovery of an

important arsenal in Khan Younis, the largest quantity of weapons to have been discovered since the PNA launched a campaign to collect unlicensed weapons two weeks earlier. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

61. On 12 and 17 March, it was reported that according to a report by Peace Watch, 213 Israelis had been killed in attacks by Palestinians since the September 1993 Oslo Accords, as compared with 99 during the corresponding period prior to the Accords. Attacks resulting in loss of life declined from 80 to 74 (37 of which were perpetrated by Hamas, in which 131 persons died, and 10 by the Islamic Jihad, in which 52 died). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was responsible for the death of nine people, while the DFLP was responsible for the death of two. The Fatah movement was responsible for the death of eight persons, before stopping its attacks in mid-1994. Peace Watch had no information with regard to the perpetrators of the remaining attacks. The number of Palestinians killed as a result of clashes with the Israeli security forces had declined by 50 per cent since the signing of the Oslo Accords. Some 298 Palestinians had been killed during the two-and-a-half years that preceded the Accords, as compared with 146 in the period following them. The decrease had become greater with the passing of time owing to fewer contacts between the security forces and the Palestinian population as a result of the IDF's redeployment first in Gaza and Jericho and subsequently in the rest of the West Bank cities. The number of Palestinians killed as a result of unprovoked attacks by Israeli civilians had increased from 11 during the two-and-a-half years before the Oslo Accords to 40 during the following two-and-a-half years. The substantial increase in the death toll was due to the Cave of the Patriarchs' (Ibrahimi Mosque) Massacre in February 1994 in which 29 Palestinians had been killed. (Jerusalem Post, 12 March; Ha'aretz, 17 March)

62. On 14 March, the army arrested 29 suspected Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists in extensive sweeps throughout the West Bank. (Jerusalem Post, 14 March; Ha'aretz, 15 March)

63. On 14 March, it was reported that the security authorities had captured and were in the process of interrogating two Palestinian youths who had planned to carry out suicide bombings. The youths are said to have been captured near Hebron on 4 March, with explosives ready for attack. They reportedly told their interrogators that they were only waiting for a signal to strike. The army refused to comment on the report and a military source stated that details of the arrest operation in the Hebron area were being kept confidential to the extent possible. (Ha'aretz, 14 March; Jerusalem Post, 15 March)

64. On 15 March, the IDF carried out raids in Palestinian villages around Jenin, capturing five Palestinians suspected of belonging to or aiding "hostile" groups. The army also raided the villages of Sabastiya and Sawarwah, but no arrests were reported. (Jerusalem Post, 17 March)

65. On 15 March, it was reported that throughout the previous week the IDF had raided homes and mosques in towns and villages located in the northern and southern parts of the West Bank and arrested Hamas activists. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

66. On 15 March, a report published by the Palestinian Prisoners' Society revealed that more than 1,000 Palestinians had been apprehended by the Israeli authorities over the past two weeks in areas "B" and "C" of the West Bank. The detainees were not allowed to meet with their attorneys. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

67. On 16 March, Palestinian officials called on Israel to put an end to the demolition of suicide bombers' family homes and to avoid any delays in the redeployment of the IDF troops in Hebron. The officials also complained about the effects that the closure had on the residents of the occupied territories, including the death of babies as a result of delays at roadblocks and cases of starvation. (Ha'aretz, 17 March)

68. On 16 and 17 March, the IDF continued its operation against Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists in the West Bank, searching villages and arresting 20 activists. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

69. On 17 March, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that he favoured deporting Palestinians linked to suicide bombers and that Israel would continue demolishing the family homes of suicide bombers. (Jerusalem Post, 18 March)

70. On 17 March, it was reported that the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, had made the Israeli redeployment in Hebron conditional on the arrest of the commander of the military wing of Hamas, Mohammed Deif, who was believed to be in hiding in Gaza. Israel also demanded the capture of Hassan Salameh, who had allegedly organized three of the four bombings and who was presumably hiding in the northern districts of the West Bank. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

71. On 17 March, the Israeli Cabinet decided to continue the security cordon around on the Palestinian self-rule areas. The Cabinet also decided to reduce the measures taken against Palestinians in order to allow the delivery of food supplies to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

72. On 18 March, the Israeli Minister of Internal Security, Moshe Shahal, announced that Israel planned to set up a wall between the Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and the quarters inhabited by Israeli settlers. Shahal stated that a new 3-kilometre-long fence would be erected to separate the Arab quarter of Dhahiyat Al Barid from the neighbouring Israeli settlement of Neve Yaacov in northern Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

73. On 19 March, the IDF arrested nine suspected Hamas activists during its continued raids in the West Bank. Twenty other Palestinian men were detained for interrogation. (Jerusalem Post, 19 March)

74. On 20 March, IDF troops detained for questioning 35 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists in the Tulkarm area; 150 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists were reported to have been detained during the previous four days. (Ha'aretz, 21 March)

75. On 20 March, the Chief of the Presidential Security Guard declared that the Palestinian security forces had cracked down on a gang of collaborators suspected of attacking joint patrols in the Bethlehem area and firing at Israeli

settlers near the Azza refugee camp. The ringleader, Ali Shamarkah Issam Afandi, stated that the gang had been paid by the israeli intelligence service with the aim of embarrassing the PNA. Their action also gave the Israelis a pretext to enter areas under PNA rule. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

76. On 21 March, the IDF arrested eight Palestinians from the West Bank on suspicion of involvement with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. The arrests were made during army raids in villages near Nablus, Hebron, Jenin and Ramallah. The Palestinians were taken for interrogation. (Jerusalem Post, 22 March)

77. On 22 March, the army continued its sweep of Hamas activists, arresting three suspects in the Hebron area. (Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

78. On 22 March, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that he would make a last-minute decision regarding the withdrawal of IDF troops from Hebron, linking the pull-out to the PNA's crackdown on extremists. Under the terms of the Oslo Accords, the IDF was to withdraw most of its troops from Hebron on 28 March. Some troops were to remain in town in order to protect the 400 settlers living there. However, the Government was reconsidering the withdrawal in view of the series of suicide bombing attacks by Islamic terrorists, which had claimed 59 lives since 25 February. (Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

79. On 22 March, it was reported that Palestinian legal institutions had estimated the number of Palestinians arrested during the previous three weeks to be around 1,200. In a separate development, the Palestinian police announced the arrest of an Islamic Jihad activist, Rashid Mohammed Ibrahim Sakr, who had planned a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on 13 March. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

80. On 23 March, Palestinian officials warned that the demolition of houses and the continued closure of the occupied territories posed a real threat to the peace process. In a statement released after the Palestinian Authority's weekly Cabinet meeting, Saeb Erakat stated that Mr. Peres had declared a war against "terrorism" but in practice had launched a war against the Palestinian people. (Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

81. On 24 March, it was reported that more than 580 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists had been arrested by the IDF since the imposition of the closure on 5 March. Some of those arrested had been placed under administrative detention; others were being interrogated. (Ha'aretz, 24 March)

82. On 28 March, the Special Ministerial Committee on the GSS extended by three months the permission given to the GSS to use "special measures", including shaking, during the interrogation of members of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas who were suspected of planning "terrorist" attacks. (Ha'aretz, 31 March)

83. On 29 March, Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan was appointed OC Central Command in replacement of Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 31 March)

84. On 31 March, the Government of Israel decided during its weekly Cabinet meeting to extend the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 April)

2. Incidents resulting from the occupation

85. The following abbreviations of the names of newspaper are used in the tables:

H: Ha'aretz

JP: Jerusalem Post

JT: The Jerusalem Times

(a) List of Palestinians killed by troops or Israeli civilians

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
5 January	Yihye Ayyash, 30	Beit Lahiya village (northern Gaza Strip)	Radical Hamas activist, known as "The Engineer", at the top of Israel's most wanted list since 1992. Blamed for a series of mortal attacks against Israelis. Killed in his hideaway in Beit Lahiya when a mobile phone containing 50 grams of explosives blew up in his face. Israel did not assume responsibility for the assassination, but politicians and security sources alike did not attempt to conceal their satisfaction at the news. (H, JP, 7 January)
19 January	Tarak Mansour	Jenin	Hamas activist. Shot dead by IDF soldiers near the Jalama checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin. According to military sources, soldiers opened fire after being fired at. (H, JP, 21 January)
19 January	Alam Abu Ada (or Ara), 23	Akaba village	Hamas activist. Shot dead by IDF soldiers near the Jalama checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin. According to military sources, soldiers opened fire after being fired at. (H, JP, 21 January)
19 January	Abed Jardat (according to H) or Ibrahim Salam (according to JP, 21 January)	Silat el Harithiya	Hamas activist. Shot dead by IDF soldiers near the Jalama checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin. According to military sources, soldiers opened fire after being fired at. (H, JP, 21 January)
20 January	Salim Abu Seif, 20		Killed in an explosion in Samu, Hebron. Believed to be a member of Hamas. (JT, 2 February)
26 February	Ahmed Abdul Hamideh, 37	United States of America (Arab-American)	American citizen of Palestinian origin. Shot dead by three Israeli civilians after he had driven into a crowd at a bus stop at the French Hill intersection in Jerusalem, killing one woman and injuring 22 other persons. A subsequent police investigation showed that the incident was not an accident but a deliberate "terrorist" attack against Israelis. (H, 27 and 28 February; JP, 27 February; also referred to in JT, 1 March)

(b) List of other Palestinians killed as a result of the occupation

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
12 January	Fausi Msalama, 50	Beit Awa village (Hebron area)	Suspected collaborator. Shot dead in Beit Awa village by unidentified gunmen riding in a speeding car. (H, 14 January)
27 January	Not reported	Samua village (Hebron area)	Hamas activist. Killed when a bomb he was preparing for an attack exploded in his hands. (H, 28 and 29 January; JP, 28 January)
1 February	Abed A-Rahman Zid Al Kilani	Yabed village (Jenin area)	Hamas administrative detainee. Died in Megido Prison. According to a Palestinian pathologist who attended the autopsy, the detainee died as a result of severe torture by several persons. The IDF spokesman did not refer to the circumstances under which the death occurred, indicating only that an investigation was under way. Investigators from the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners who later visited the detention facility and gathered testimonies from prisoners arrived at the conclusion that Kilani had been tortured by other Palestinian prisoners and not by the representatives of the prison authorities. (H, 4 and 18 February)
Exact date not reported	Adel Yusuf A-Shatit	Dura village (Hebron area)	Hamas detainee. Sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment for his involvement in the Hamas movement. Died in Megido Prison in unclear circumstances. According to the Abu Kbir Forensic Institute, he died in circumstances similar to those which led to the death of another detainee on 1 February. (H, 18 February)
25 February	Majdi Abu Wardeh, 19	El-Fawar refugee camp (Hebron area)	Hamas suicide bomber. Detonated a bomb aboard an Egged company bus in Jerusalem, killing 24 persons and wounding 50 others. (H, JP, 26 and 28 February and 1 March; also referred to in JT, 1 March)
25 February	Ibrahim Sarahna, 25	El-Fawar refugee camp (Hebron area)	Hamas suicide bomber. Detonated a bomb at a crowded hitchhiking post outside Ashkelon, killing one person and wounding 34 others. (H, JP, 26 and 28 February and 1 March)
29 February	Ahmed Sanjak (age not reported)	(not reported)	Wanted by Israel on charges of involvement in the killing of collaborators. Fatally shot in Ramin village (Tulkarm area). Palestinian sources reported that the killing could have been carried out by collaborators. (H, 1 March)
3 March	Raed Karim Sharnoubi or Shaghnoubi, 21	Burka village	Hamas suicide bomber. Student at the United Nations-run Teachers' Training College in Ramallah. Detonated a bomb abroad a bus in Jerusalem, killing 19 people. (H, 4, 7 and 10 March; JP, 7 and 10 March)

Date	Name and age	Place of residence	Remarks and source
3 March	George Younan, 39 Angele Safar, 39	Jerusalem Beit Jala	Killed in the suicide bomb attack on an Israeli bus on Jaffa Street. (JT, 8 March)
4 March	Ramez Abayed, 24	Khan Younis refugee camp	Suicide bomber. Student at the Teachers' Training College in Gaza. Detonated a bomb in the centre of Tel Aviv, killing 12 or 13 civilians and injuring 109. (H, 5 and 17 March; JP, 5 March)

(c) Other incidents

86. On 1 January, a confrontation took place between Palestinian policemen and IDF soldiers in the Tulkarm district (designated as "B" area). The incident reportedly occurred when Palestinian policemen surrounded several soldiers and prevented them from moving on the grounds that they were not authorized to operate in the area. The incident ended after an investigation had taken place. Israel made an official protest to the Palestinians. (Jerusalem Post, 2 January)

87. On 3 January, an Israeli ambulance was hit by stones in two separate incidents in the Ramallah area. A reservist who had mistakenly driven into Ramallah was rescued by the Palestinian police after his vehicle was surrounded by several Palestinian youths. Two incidents in which stones were thrown at border police vehicles took place in the Hebron area. A soldier was slightly wounded in one of the incidents. (Ha'aretz, 4 January; Jerusalem Post, 5 January)

88. On 4 January, an Israeli truck driver was stabbed and slightly to moderately wounded in El-Jib village located north-west of Jerusalem. IDF soldiers and police arrived on the scene and began searching for the assailant. No arrests were made. In Hebron, a Palestinian woman was detained on suspicion of planning to stab border policemen in the vicinity the Cave of the Patriarchs. Stone-throwing incidents involving the throwing of stones at an Israeli ambulance took place in Ramallah and in the proximity of the Jalazone refugee camp (West Bank). An Israeli was slightly injured by flying glass. The IDF spokesman stated that soldiers had launched searches in the area. Three other incidents involving the throwing of stones at Israeli vehicles occurred on major roads in the Ramallah area. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 5 January)

89. On 5 January, Yihya Ayyash, Israel's most wanted "terrorist", was killed (see list) in his hideaway in the Beit Lahiya village in the northern Gaza Strip when a booby-trapped mobile phone operated by remote control blew up in his face. A large number of public organizations and political figures in the territories, including PNA President Yasser Arafat, strongly condemned the assassination. Hamas issued a leaflet calling for revenge. Tens of thousands of Palestinians (more than 100,000 according to some estimates) attended Ayyash's funeral procession on 6 January. A three-day commercial strike called by Hamas was observed throughout the territories and protest rallies attended by thousands of Palestinians were held in several cities. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 7 January)

90. On 5 January, a wanted Hamas activist was killed (see list) in Gaza. The activist, known as "The engineer", died in Gaza when a booby-trapped mobile telephone that he answered exploded. The Israeli intelligence service, the Shavak, is believed to have planned and organized the assassination of the Engineer. (The Jerusalem Times, 12 January)

91. On 6 January, stones were thrown at a border police jeep near the A-Ram junction north of Jerusalem. The vehicle was slightly damaged but there were no injuries.(Ha'aretz, 7 January)

92. On 7 January, a small Bangalore torpedo exploded at the entrance to a Jewish-owned house in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem without causing any damage. Five Palestinians who were found near the site were detained for questioning. Two incendiary bottles were thrown at military vehicles in the Nablus area. The bottles exploded on the road without causing any damage. Numerous other incidents in which stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles took place in the territories without any report of casualties. According to settlers, the majority of the incidents occurred on the Jerusalem-Hebron road, near Halhoul. An Israeli who faced mortal danger opened fire during one of the incidents. One stone-thrower was detained by IDF troops. (Ha'aretz, 8 January)

93. On 11 January, two border policemen were slightly injured when a roadside bomb exploded in the vicinity of the Sufa checkpoint in Gaza. In another incident, two Israeli ambulances were stoned in Ramallah. No one was injured but the ambulances were damaged. According to the head of the Binyamin Regional Council, stone-throwing attacks on Israeli vehicles had increased in frequency in Ramallah since the IDF pulled out of the town. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 January)

94. On 12 January, a 50-year-old Palestinian from Beit Awa village was shot dead (see list) by unidentified gunmen riding in a speeding car, apparently on suspicion of collaboration with the Israeli security authorities. This was reportedly the first killing of a suspected collaborator since the transfer of authority over West Bank cities to the Palestinians. Fears were expressed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that violent incidents involving Palestinian activists and suspected collaborators would intensify because of the killing of Yahya Ayyash, the Engineer, which apparently had been committed with the collusion of a collaborator, and the recent release of more than 230 Palestinians who had been convicted of killing or injuring collaborators. (Ha'aretz, 14 January)

95. On 12 January, tens of thousands of Hamas militants held mass rallies in honour of Yihya Ayyash in Ramallah, Gaza and Nablus and swore to avenge his assassination. Smaller rallies were held in other localities in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 14 January)

96. On 14 January, the IDF barred Israelis from entering Ramallah following a number of stone-throwing incidents there. (Jerusalem Post, 15 January)

97. On 15 January, military sources reported 19 incidents in which stones were thrown at IDF and Israeli vehicles in the territories. An Israeli was shot and

moderately wounded in the Bethlehem area. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 16 January)

98. On 16 January, two Israeli soldiers were killed when their vehicle came under fire near Beit Ummar, south of Gush Etzion. A caller identifying himself as a member of the Mujahadin el-Islam, a previously unknown organization, told the army radio that the attack had been carried out in retaliation for the assassination of Yihya Ayyash. Settlement sources reported that 27 incidents in which stones were thrown at Israeli cars had taken place in the area of the shooting during the past week. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 January)

99. On 16 January, two Israeli soldiers were killed in their car following an armed attack by Palestinians near the village of Beit Ummar, located on the Jerusalem-Hebron road. (The Jerusalem Times, 19 January)

100. On 18 January, a number of incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF and other Israeli vehicles occurred in the territories. Settlers' vehicles were stoned on the Ramallah bypass road and in the vicinity of Hebron. Other stone-throwing incidents took place in the proximity of the Cave of the Patriarchs, where two stone-throwers were detained by the IDF. (Ha'aretz, 19 January)

101. On 19 January, three armed Hamas activists were shot dead (see list) by IDF soldiers near the Jalama checkpoint at the entrance to Jenin. According to military sources, the incident occurred when one of the "terrorists" opened fire at the soldiers, slightly injuring one of them in the leg. The soldiers responded with gunfire, killing all three men. Eyewitnesses reported that the soldiers had fired dozens of bullets at the activists' car. All political organizations in Jenin, including the PNA and the Fatah movement, blamed Israel for the killing and large crowds took to the streets to protest against what they described as a murder in cold blood. The protesters refused to accept the Israeli version that the men were on their way to carry out an attack and were killed in an exchange of fire. They tore down campaign posters for the Palestinian elections, which they called a farce because of the continued IDF presence in the West Bank. In a separate incident, several "terrorists" opened fire at an army outpost in the south of the Gaza Strip; no damage or injuries were reported. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

102. On 19 January, three Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers on the Jenin-Jalmah road. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

103. On 20 January, a Jewish girl from the Kiryat Arba settlement was slightly injured when she was stabbed in the back by an Arab youth in Hebron. The presumed assailant tried to escape but was caught and detained for interrogation. The Hebron District Police chief noted that there was constant friction between Jews and Arabs in the town. In another incident, a Palestinian woman was detained after she had tried to stab a border policeman at Rachel's Tomb, allegedly in order to clear herself of charges of collaboration with Israel. Several "terrorists" opened fire at an IDF outpost in the vicinity of the Beit El settlement; no damage or injuries were reported. Four other incidents in which stones were thrown at IDF and settlers' vehicles were reported in the territories. In East Jerusalem, a number of incidents occurred

in the vicinity of several post offices where voting for the PNC was under way. Hundreds of policemen dispersed a crowd gathered in Salah A-Din Street following a number of stone-throwing incidents in the area. Stones were also thrown near a post office in Beit Hanina. No injuries were reported. Two Palestinian youths were detained for questioning. In Jenin, thousands of residents attended the funeral of the three Hamas activists who had been shot dead by IDF soldiers a day earlier. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

104. On 20 January, a Palestinian was killed in an explosion in Samu, south of Hebron (see list). Sources indicated that he was a member of Hamas. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

105. On 21 January, a 16-year-old Palestinian youth stole a pistol from a soldier in Jerusalem. The youth was caught and the weapon retrieved. (Jerusalem Post, 22 January)

106. On 22 January, three Arabs reportedly tried to kidnap in Jerusalem an Israeli taxi driver whom they had threatened with a knife. The driver managed to escape while the Arabs took his taxi. In a separate incident, a civil guard was slightly injured in the leg after being attacked in Tel Aviv by a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip. The incident reportedly occurred when the Palestinian refused to show his identity card and attacked the guard with an iron bar. (Ha'aretz, 23 January)

107. On 24 January, it was reported that eight explosive devices had been detonated near a number of settlements in the Gaza Strip over the previous two weeks. (Ha'aretz, 24 January)

108. On 24 January, Palestinian youths threw a brick on the car of the Hebron chief of police. Policemen at the site opened fire at the youths, who managed to escape. Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles on the Ramallah bypass road as well as on several other roads in the territories. Settlers reported 25 incidents in which stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles during the previous two weeks. (Ha'aretz, 25 January)

109. On 24 January, a resident of Hiblah, near Kalkiliya, was hit and wounded in the head when Israeli soldiers opened fire at Palestinians trying to stop bulldozers from levelling their land. Soldiers also beat up a journalist from the Reuters news agency. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

110. On 27 January, a Hamas activist was killed (see list) in the West Bank village of Samua near Hebron when a bomb he was preparing for an attack exploded in his hand. (Ha'aretz, 28 and 29 January; Jerusalem Post, 28 January)

111. On 28 January, two stone-throwing incidents occurred in the Hebron area. A border policeman was slightly injured in one of the incidents. Two other incidents in which stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles took place in the Ramallah area. One settler reportedly fired shots in the air. (Ha'aretz, 29 January)

112. On 30 January, a 19-year-old Hamas activist from the Jenin refugee camp stabbed to death an IDF soldier at the Dotan army base in the Jenin area, which

houses the Civil Administration, the District Coordination and Liaison Office, police and IDF troops. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 30 January)

113. On 30 January, an Israeli soldier was stabbed to death by a Palestinian on the premises of the Jenin Liaison Civil Committee. The attacker is believed to have been a Hamas activist. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

114. On 4 February, a 17-year-old "terrorist" from Jenin stabbed in the back an IDF soldier in Afula. The soldier was slightly to moderately injured. The youth was caught subsequently by an off-duty policeman. A 16-year-old Palestinian was moderately wounded when he was shot in the back near Nablus under unclear circumstances. According to a preliminary report by the Palestinian Police, the youth was injured when a settler opened fire at a group of Palestinian students. The Prime Minister's Office stated, however, that the allegation was unfounded. A guard at an Israeli-run quarry near Tarkumia was slightly injured when two Palestinian assailants tried to seize his gun. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 5 February)

115. On 7 February, a Palestinian youth who tried to enter Jerusalem with a fake identity card was shot and slightly wounded in the leg by border policemen at the Gilo checkpoint after he had ignored an order to stop. A border policeman was moderately wounded during a stone-throwing incident in the Hebron area. IDF and border police units launched searches for the stone-throwers. In another incident in the Hebron area, an Israeli driver was slightly injured when stones were thrown at his vehicle. In Ramallah, the Palestinian Police rescued an IDF jeep that had been stoned and surrounded by residents after it had mistakenly entered the centre of town. A confrontation occurred between Palestinians and IDF soldiers over the construction of a small Palestinian airport in Dahaniya, near Rafah. The incident occurred when soldiers entered the construction site and ordered the Palestinian workers to stop work on the grounds that the operation had not been coordinated with Israel, as had been stipulated in their agreement. The workers refused to stop work and called in Palestinian policemen. An argument between the policemen and the soldiers ensued. It was brought to an end by senior Palestinian and Israeli officers. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 8 February)

116. On 9 February, hundreds of Palestinians took part in a commemoration rally for Yihya Ayyash. During the rally, which was authorized by the Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists announced that they were planning an attack to avenge the killing of Ayyash. In another development, a confrontation erupted between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen over the construction of a Palestinian airport in Dahaniya, partly located in area "B", which is under Israeli security control. The incident occurred when dozens of armed Palestinian policemen cordoned off IDF soldiers after they had ordered a tractor carrying out ground work in area "B" to stop work. The soldiers ordered the policemen to leave the site but they refused. The confrontation was brought to an end after several coordinating officers arrived on the scene and ordered the policemen to leave. (Ha'aretz, 11 February)

117. On 10 February, a confrontation occurred out between IDF soldiers and Palestinians over the construction of a Palestinian airport in Dahaniya, near Rafah. The incident occurred when several tractors, escorted by some 100

Palestinian policemen, arrived at the construction site to continue ground-levelling work. In response, several dozen soldiers entered the site, following which the Palestinian policemen drew their weapons. The confrontation was brought to an end by Palestinian and Israeli Liaison Officers who arrived on the scene. This was the third such confrontation over the construction of the airport. Security sources voiced fears that such confrontations might degenerate into exchanges of fire. (Ha'aretz, 12 February)

118. On 13 February, shots were fired from the direction of the Jerusalem Arab neighbourhood of Dahiyat El Barid at an elementary school in the adjacent Jewish settlement of Neveh Yaacov. A window was broken but there were no casualties. A police spokeswoman stated that Palestinian "terrorists" could have been involved in the incident. An Israeli driver was slightly injured when two masked men threw an incendiary bottle at his vehicle in the vicinity of Kalkiliya. Numerous policemen launched searches for the attackers. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 14 February)

119. On 15 February, three Bangalore torpedoes exploded at the passage of an IDF convoy on the Nablus bypass. The devices exploded some distance from the convoy, causing no casualties. Numerous IDF and border police troops as well as police bomb-disposal experts were dispatched to the area where they detected another explosive device. A fragmentation grenade was thrown at a border police jeep in the Dheisheh refugee camp (West Bank); no injuries were reported. Five incidents involving the throwing of stones at border policemen took place near the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque); no damage or injuries were reported. Two other incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF vehicles occurred in the Ramallah area; no damage or injuries were reported. A 14-year-old Palestinian boy was wounded when he was shot in the leg near Ramallah. During questioning, the boy stated that he had been shot at by the driver of a black Mercedes who shouted "Halt" at him in Arabic and then opened fire. In another incident, several Palestinians were detained following a riot in the Old City of Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 16 and 18 February)

120. On 16 February, Palestinian youths threw stones and empty bottles at policemen near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. A 10-year-old boy was injured in the eye when the policemen dispersed the youths. In another incident in the Old City, a Palestinian youth was detained after he had tried to attack a border policeman with a knife. Several other incidents in which stones were thrown at police and border police forces also occurred in the Old City. (Ha'aretz, 16 February)

121. On 17 February, several incidents involving the throwing of stones at IDF troops occurred in Hebron, Bethlehem and Ramallah. Military sources reported that the number of stone-throwing incidents in Palestinian-controlled areas had increased recently. Shots were fired at an IDF outpost in the Gaza Strip. Soldiers responded by firing in the air; no damage or injuries were reported. The IDF estimated that the shots had been fired from the autonomous areas. The security authorities reinforced patrols along roads in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 18 February)

122. On 18 February, IDF troops used tear-gas and percussion grenades to disperse hundreds of stone-throwing Palestinians in Hebron. According to

eyewitnesses, scores of demonstrators were injured during the clashes. (Jerusalem Post, 19 February)

123. On 19 February, an Israeli taxi driver was attacked in Jerusalem by two Palestinian passengers. The Palestinians threatened him with a knife and robbed him of NIS 2,000. They also banged his head against the windscreen. The driver was taken to hospital after being discovered half unconscious by border policemen. The assailants managed to escape. In a similar incident, another Israeli taxi driver was robbed and slightly injured in the Kalkiliya area by three Palestinian passengers who threatened him with a knife and a pistol. Three incidents in which stones were thrown at IDF vehicles occurred in Ramallah, with no reports of casualties. (Ha'aretz, 20 February)

124. On 22 February, several thousand Palestinians rallied in Kalkiliya to protest against the peace process, setting fire to a mock Israeli bus and carrying empty coffins symbolically intended for future suicide bombers. An IDF soldier was slightly injured during a stone-throwing incident in the Dahariya area. Three incidents involving the throwing of stones at border policemen occurred in Hebron. Two border policemen were slightly injured. Several other stone-throwing incidents took place on the Ramallah road. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

125. On 23 February, IDF troops and Palestinian gunmen exchanged heavy fire in the Gaza Strip after a number of shots were fired from the autonomous areas at an Israeli patrol. Palestinian sources indicated that they did not know of any casualties. The IDF spokeswoman reported that one gunman may have been injured. She stated that the gunmen had escaped into the Palestinian-ruled areas. Two border policemen were slightly injured when stones were thrown at them in Hebron. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 February)

126. On 25 February, two Hamas suicide bombers detonated two explosive devices in two separate but coordinated attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon, killing themselves (see list), 25 other people and wounding 84. The attack in Jerusalem took place at 6.48 in the morning, when the suicide bomber detonated between 10 and 20 kilograms of TNT on an Egged company bus near the City's central bus station, killing 24 people, most of them soldiers, and wounding 50 others. Forty-five minutes later, another suicide bomber detonated a similar but smaller explosive device at a crowded hitchhiking post outside Ashkelon, killing one female soldier and wounding 34 other people, most of them soldiers. Hamas issued a leaflet asserting that the Jihad (Holy War) would continue until the occupation was lifted from every bit of Palestine. Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered the peace talks with the Palestinians to be suspended until after the victims' funerals. He also demanded that the PNA take more decisive steps to destroy the infrastructures of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 and 28 February and 1 March)

127. On 25 February, two Palestinians blew themselves up in two separate suicide bomb attacks on Israeli buses, in Jerusalem and Ashkelon, killing 27 Israelis and injuring over 80 people (see list). An organization calling itself "The Cells of Yihya Ayyash" claimed responsibility for the bombings. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

128. On 26 February, an Arab American of Palestinian origin was shot dead (see list) by three Israeli civilians after he had driven into a crowded bus stop in Jerusalem, killing an Israeli woman and injuring 22 or 23 other people. An investigation of the incident determined that it was not an accident but a deliberate "terrorist" attack against Israelis. (Ha'aretz, 27 and 28 February; Jerusalem Post, 27 February)

129. On 26 February, an Arab-American man was shot and killed by Israeli bystanders in Jerusalem (see list). The bystanders thought he was a suicide bomber. One Israeli woman was killed and 22 people were wounded. Hamas later admitted that the man was a member of their movement. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

130. On 27 February, a Palestinian man was slightly wounded near Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip when IDF soldiers opened fire at a vehicle he was a passenger in after the driver had ignored an order to stop. Five stone-throwing incidents during which two soldiers were slightly injured occurred in Hebron. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 28 February)

131. On 29 February, a wanted Palestinian man suspected of involvement in the killing of collaborators was shot in Ramin village. He later died of his wounds in hospital (see list). Palestinian sources raised the possibility that the man had been killed by collaborators. (Ha'aretz, 1 March)

132. On 1 March, IDF troops apprehended five Hamas "terrorists" from Khan Younis who were on their way to commit mass killings in the Gaza Strip settlement of Gadid. The "terrorists", who were caught with fire-bombs, axes, knives and a copy of the Koran, were intercepted only 300 metres away from the settlement buildings. During their initial interrogation, they revealed that they had trained for the attack for a month and intended to kill as many people as possible. Two other "terrorists" who decided not to participate in the attack at the last moment were identified and arrested by the Palestinian Authority. A senior IDF source reported that the closure was making it difficult for Hamas to carry out attacks in Israel, so they tried to embarrass the Authority by attacking areas near the autonomous region. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 3 March)

133. On 2 March, the twenty-fifth victim of the No. 18 bus bombing in Jerusalem on 25 February died of his wounds at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 3 March)

134. On 3 March, a Hamas suicide bomber detonated a bomb aboard a No. 18 bus in the centre of Jerusalem, killing himself (see list), 18 other people and seriously injuring 7 others. On 9 March, the nineteenth victim of the bombing died of lung and head injuries after a week in the intensive care unit at Hadassah Hospital. Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that Israel was in a state of total war against the Hamas and other "terrorist" organizations and that it would take all steps and spare no effort to destroy Hamas. (Ha'aretz, 4, 7 and 10 March; Jerusalem Post, 7 and 10 March)

135. On 3 March, the Ayyash Cells, the new military wing of Hamas, claimed responsibility for the suicide bomb attack on an Israeli bus on Jaffa Street in Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

136. On 4 March, a suicide bomber detonated a 20-kilogram nail bomb near the crowded Dizengoff centre in the heart of Tel Aviv, killing himself (see list) and 12 or 13 others, including 4 youths, and injuring 109. According to the police, the bomber, a member of Hamas's Izz al-din al-Qassam "terrorist" organization, intended to enter the Dizengoff shopping mall in order to kill and maim an even greater number of people but was deterred by the presence of two policemen guarding the doorway. He therefore decided to detonate the bomb as he was crossing the crowded street. The Tel Aviv police chief indicated that hundreds of people would have been killed if the "terrorist" had succeeded in entering the large mall. About two hours after the bombing, an anonymous caller telephoned Israel Radio to indicate that the attack was a joint operation of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. Security sources announced that they were preparing for a continuation of the wave of "terrorist" bombings and that police and sniper units had been deployed in major cities and on highways. Following the attack, hundreds of persons gathered outside the Defence Ministry, lighting fires and stoning cars in protest against the attack. The swelling crowd called for Prime Minister Peres to resign and chanted "Death to the Arabs". The protesters also held up signs reading "Peres promises and gives us a new Middle East: drenched in blood". Meanwhile, numerous West Bank residents rushed to petrol stations to fill the tanks of their cars and hurried to grocery shops in order to buy basic foodstuffs as fears of Israeli retaliatory action were growing. Rumours spread that Israel might enter the autonomous areas or place them under siege. Residents from the Ramallah area reported a build-up of Israeli troops at the entrance to the town. In a separate development, two yeshiva students were slightly to moderately injured when they were stabbed by an assailant in the centre of Hebron. The assailant was shot and arrested by the IDF. (Ha'aretz, 5 and 17 March; Jerusalem Post, 5 March)

137. On 4 March, two students from the religious academy in Hebron were stabbed. A settler shot the assailant, who was seriously injured and subsequently arrested. Afterwards, settlers raided shops and attacked journalists. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

138. On 6 March, ten incendiary bottles were found in the attic of a house in Beit Hanina. There was no one at home at the time of the search and no arrests were made. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 7 March)

139. On 7 March, the Islamic Jihad of Palestine claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing at the Dizengoff centre in Tel Aviv on 4 March. A statement published in Beirut stated that the suicide mission was one of a series meant to avenge the killing of Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shakaki, who had been slain in Malta in October 1995. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

140. On 11 March, an Israeli settler was injured in the eye when stones were thrown at his vehicle on the Bethlehem bypass road. Other stone-throwing incidents took place in the Bethlehem and Hebron areas with no reports of casualties. (Ha'aretz, 12 March)

141. On 31 March, a youth from East Jerusalem was slightly injured by the police when a march of Arab scouts ended in violence, with the participants throwing stones and bottles at the police. (Jerusalem Post, 1 April)

B. Administration of justice, including the right to a fair trial

1. Palestinian population

142. On 28 January, it was reported that a Palestinian from Beit Sahur had filed a civil suit against two settlers who had shot him in the feet in an attempt to circumvent the Government's insistence that Palestinians should not be compensated for intifadah-related injuries. In March 1992, the Palestinian was reportedly shot in the feet by two settlers who stated that they were looking for the person who had thrown stones at their car earlier in the day. During subsequent criminal proceedings the Jerusalem District Court ruled that the settlers had acted in self-defence. (Jerusalem Post, 28 January)

143. On 2 February, it was reported that the trial of Aysheh Ayyash, the mother of Yehya Ayyash, known as "The Engineer", who was killed recently in Gaza, was postponed until 13 March. Ayyash's mother is on trial for travelling with falsified documents and is confined to her house under administrative detention. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

144. On 9 February, it was reported that an Israeli court had ordered that the detention of Ibrahim Sharif, 38, from Beit Hanina, be extended for an additional eight days in order to continue his interrogation. Ibrahim Sharif was accused of helping his brother, Mohyeddin, who is being sought by the Israeli authorities for preparing the bomb that was used by the suicide bomber who blew himself up in Jerusalem in August 1995. Sharif is also accused of membership of Hamas. In an attempt to force the wanted Palestinian to surrender, Israeli intelligence also arrested several of Mohyeddin's relatives. It has been reported that since arresting Sharif's relatives, the police had extended their detention through court proceedings held in closed session. The police also prohibited the publication of any information concerning the circumstances of their arrests and the nature of the charges against them. (The Jerusalem Times, 9 February)

145. On 16 February, it was reported that as a gesture of good will on the occasion of the end of Ramadan, the Nazareth Magistrate's Court had ordered the release of two residents of East Jerusalem who had been convicted of security offences, thereby overruling two earlier decisions by the Committee on Prisoners' Release not to reduce their sentences by one third. In their ruling, the justices indicated that they had taken into consideration the fact that the two persons had only a short period to serve before the completion of their sentences. (Ha'aretz, 16 February)

146. On 27 February, it was reported that the High Court of Justice had reduced the sentence meted out to a Palestinian youth from the Shu'fat refugee camp who had been sentenced by the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court to six months' imprisonment plus a one-year suspended prison term for encouraging the throwing of stones at vehicles on a road leading to the Pisgat Zeev settlement. The High Court annulled the six-month prison term but upheld the one-year suspended sentence. (Ha'aretz, 27 February)

147. On 4 March, it was reported that two Palestinians had been sentenced by the Ramla Magistrate's Court to one year of imprisonment for staying in Israel illegally. (Ha'aretz, 4 March)

148. On 5 March, a 16-year-old Palestinian youth from the Jenin area was sentenced by the Nazareth Magistrate's Court to five months' imprisonment for staying in Israel illegally by using a false identity card. (Ha'aretz, 6 March)

149. On 6 March, it was reported that 38 Palestinian workers from the occupied territories who were staying in Israel illegally had been sentenced during speedy trials to six-month suspended sentences and fined NIS 500 each. The workers were expelled to the autonomous areas. (Ha'aretz, 6 March)

150. On 15 March, it was reported that according to Khalil Tufakji, a Palestinian expert on settlement affairs, recent Israeli legal rulings concerning house demolition and land confiscation policies had been influenced by the bus bombings. Tufakji referred to a decision of the Israeli High Court on 11 March in favour of building Routes No. 4 and 45, which would entail the demolition of many Palestinian houses and lead to the confiscation of thousands of dunums of land. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

151. On 19 March, the High Court of Justice rejected seven appeals filed against the demolitions of the family homes of seven Hamas activists who had taken part in mass attacks. (Ha'aretz, 20 March)

152. On 28 March, a Palestinian man from the Gaza Strip married to an Israeli citizen with whom he was living in the town of Taibe appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the Interior Ministry to grant him Israeli citizenship. The Court was also asked to order the police to close the files opened against him for staying illegally in Israel and to issue an interim order to prevent the police and the Interior Ministry from expelling him pending the hearing of his appeal. The Palestinian, who had been married to an Israeli citizen for three years, claimed that his predicament was particularly difficult since he lived in constant fear of being arrested and expelled. He stated that he was in fear whenever he left his home for work, at checkpoints and upon his return home. In addition, he could not visit his family in the Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, 28 March)

2. Israelis

153. On 2 January, a settler from Beit El charged with the killing of a Palestinian in Givat Artis in August 1995 appealed to the High Court of Justice against the refusal of the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court to ease the conditions of his release on bail. On 13 August 1995, the defendant opened fire at a group of villagers from Dura el Qara after they had destroyed a settler encampment on a hill near the Beit El settlement. He was released on NIS 200,000 bail and prohibited from entering the West Bank or East Jerusalem. In addition, the settler was not allowed to bear firearms. The settler's attorney had asked for the conditions of his release to be facilitated on the grounds that his trial would start only in March 1996 and was expected to last for a long time. He claimed that the settler was married and a father of six and that the conditions of his release had a very negative impact on his freedom. In addition, he

claimed that at present, some four months after the Court's ruling, there was no room for what he described as the serious limitations imposed on his client's freedom of movement in view of the fact that tension in Givat Artis had already subsided. (Ha'aretz, 3 January)

154. On 3 January, the OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran issued two administrative orders banning two right-wing activists from entering Nablus or the area of Joseph's Tomb. The order cited security reasons for the ban. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 January)

155. On 4 January, it was reported that the OC Zone of the Interior, Maj.-Gen. Shmuel Arad, had decided to reduce to three months a six-month restricting order prohibiting a Jewish right-wing activist from entering the Temple Mount. (Ha'aretz, 4 January)

156. On 19 January, the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court sentenced a settler to six months of community service for endangering lives by throwing stones at a Palestinian vehicle in 1994. (Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

157. On 12 February, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court acquitted the head of the Hai Vekayam movement of charges of violating a court order that forbade him to come within three metres of the Temple Mount. (Jerusalem Post, 13 February)

158. On 18 February, the High Court of Justice lifted the restrictions imposed on the chairman of the extreme right-wing Hai Vekayam movement, which prohibited him from leaving the Ofra settlement and placed him under house arrest during the night. The restrictions, which had been in force for more than nine months, were imposed after he had been convicted of violating a magistrate's court order that forbade him to enter the Temple Mount; of attacking a policeman under aggravated circumstances; and of causing disturbances. The Court acceded to the attorney's request to lift the restrictions on the grounds that the defendant's acquittal a week earlier on charges that he had violated a court order by coming near the Temple Mount constituted a substantial change of circumstances. However, the Court banned him from coming within 50 metres of the Old City walls. The prosecution voiced the concern that the defendant would continue to pose a threat to the public, indicating that he had persisted in his refusal to sign an undertaking not to enter the Temple Mount. (Ha'aretz, 19 February)

159. On 22 February, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court sentenced the spokesman of the former Kach movement to four months' imprisonment for attacking a policeman under aggravated circumstances; resisting legal arrest; and violating three restricting orders issued by the OC Central Command. (Ha'aretz, 23 February)

160. On 29 February, the Beersheva Magistrate's Court sentenced an Israeli man to life imprisonment for the premeditated murder of a Palestinian from Idna village (Hebron area) in March 1994. The man had been convicted of firing several shots from an UZI sub-machine-gun at the Palestinian who had stopped his truck on the side of the Hebron road, probably in order to pray. (Ha'aretz, 1 March)

161. On 5 March, the Natanya Magistrate's Court sentenced an Israeli employer to three months' imprisonment plus three months of community service for having employed a Palestinian from the territories. (Ha'aretz, 6 March)

C. Treatment of civilians

1. General developments

(a) Harassment and physical ill-treatment

162. On 24 January, it was reported that Eli Souissa, the Jerusalem District Head at the Interior Ministry and Chairman of the Planning and Construction Committee, had threatened to reject objections voiced by the residents of Tuba and Beit Sahur against the construction of the Har Homa settlement on land confiscated from them in southern Jerusalem. Mr. Souissa rejected the objections on the grounds that they were written in Arabic, despite the fact that Arabic is an official language in Israel. He notified the residents' attorney that if an official translation into Hebrew was not made within three days, the objections would not be accepted. After an inquiry conducted by the Jerusalem Post, the threat was withdrawn and a statement released that the objections in Arabic would be accepted. It was reported that had Mr. Souissa refused the texts in Arabic, the bulk of the residents' objections would not have been presented to the Committee. In a comment about the incident, the Interior Ministry spokeswoman stated that Arabs who filed objections in Arabic were asked to translate them into Hebrew and that those who refused to do so for what she described as unknown and puzzling reasons had their objections considered only after they were translated by the Jerusalem Municipality. (Jerusalem Post, 24 January)

163. On 31 January, it was reported that nine Palestinian workers of the Jerusalem Municipal Sanitation Department had complained of being threatened and harassed by a well-connected city official. They stated that the official, a political appointee of Mayor Olmert, had humiliated them and ordered them to carry out various tasks other than their daily job. When they refused, he reportedly threatened to have them dismissed or taken care of by the GSS. The official denied the allegations. (Jerusalem Post, 31 January)

164. On 16 February, it was reported that the Jerusalem Municipality had refused to take any action against a Sanitation Department official who had made derogatory remarks about Arab workers, despite the fact that his comments were verified in a tape recording. The official reportedly stated on the tape that he did not need any Arabs and that they could all go to hell. (Jerusalem Post, 16 February)

165. On 25 February, it was reported that the PNA had presented Israel with a list of alleged violations of the Oslo II Accords at the Allenby Bridge border crossing. The complaints focused on four main areas: inefficiency, red tape and bureaucracy in dealing with Palestinian travellers (in particular before the Id al-Fitr, when numerous Palestinians visit their relatives in Jordan); humiliating treatment by Israeli security forces; arrests and detention of Palestinians crossing the bridge; and the presence of armed and uniformed

Israeli soldiers and policemen in the bridge area, although they were supposed to be "unnoticeable" according to the Accords. The spokesman for the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories stated that the complaints would be examined. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

166. On 9 March, the Palestinian officer in command of the Coordinating Office in Hebron lodged a complaint with the Israeli authorities following an incident in which four Palestinian policemen were attacked by IDF soldiers. The incident occurred at a roadblock in Hebron when soldiers ordered the policemen out of their vehicle and attacked and beat them in front of residents. The Palestinian officer claimed that while similar attacks on civilians had become routine, the gravity of the incident in question lay in the beating of the policemen. (Ha'aretz, 10 March)

167. On 10 March, a 20-day-old Palestinian baby died at the Israeli military checkpoint set up at the entrance to Tulkarm when the ambulance carrying the baby was held up for over an hour by the Israeli authorities before being allowed to proceed to a hospital. The baby suffered from an irregular heartbeat. On 12 March, a pair of twins died at a checkpoint near Bethlehem. The mother, who was in labour, was whisked off to hospital but the car she was in was not allowed to pass the checkpoint at Nahalin. The woman gave birth to the babies inside the car. The twins died. In a third incident of the same type, a 45-year-old Palestinian from Shaqba, west of Ramallah, suffered a heart attack and died when he was refused access to a hospital at the checkpoint near his village on 13 March. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

168. On 11 March, the Ministry of Information of the Palestinian Authority in Hebron was raided, its premises ransacked and furniture smashed. Palestinian officials stated that this raid was one of a series perpetrated by the Israeli army against Palestinian cultural and educational institutions in the town. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

169. On 18 March, the Israeli authorities allowed a child from Gaza into Israel for treatment following a three-hour delay at the Beit Hanoun junction. The 14-month-old child was allowed into Israel after his father had got in touch with journalists in order to put pressure on the Israeli authorities. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

170. On 22 March, it was reported that two-year-old Mohammed Awad Khawaldeh from the Khan Younis refugee camp had died after being denied permission by the Israeli authorities to seek medical help at the Makassed Hospital in Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

(b) Collective punishment

(i) Houses or rooms that were demolished or sealed

171. On 28 February, the Civil Administration demolished five Palestinian-owned houses in the Hebron area located between the settlements of Kiryat Arba and Al Kubaa, that had been built without permits. A sixth house was saved when an order to stop the demolitions arrived from the Defence Minister's office. The Civil Administration spokesman stated that the demolition orders had been signed

several weeks earlier and dismissed Palestinian claims that they were a response to Sunday's bombing attacks carried out by two Palestinian men from the area. The demolition was carried out at the request of the Kiryat Arba settlement to allow for the building of another settlement in the area. Six additional houses are reportedly slated for demolition for the same reason. About 100 demonstrators protested against the demolitions, which prompted Environment Minister Yossi Sarid to urge Prime Minister Shimon Peres, acting as Defence Minister, to halt the operation for the time being. According to Mayor Mustafa Natshe of Hebron, 60 people remained homeless as a result of the demolitions. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 29 February; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

172. On 4 March, the IDF sealed the family homes in the Fawar refugee camp of the two suicide bombers who carried out the attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon on 25 February. Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that Israel could not accept scenes of jubilation in Palestinian towns after each "terrorist" attack. Mr. Peres also referred to the signs hung up by the families of the two bombers during their wake saying: "We are accepting congratulations, not condolences". They also served sweet coffee instead of the bitter coffee traditionally served at funerals. (Ha'aretz, 5 and 6 March 1996; Jerusalem Post, 5 March)

173. On 5 March, the security forces completed the sealing of the family homes of the "terrorists" who had carried out or were involved in the recent suicide bombing attacks. In the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina, the police sealed the family home of one of the most wanted Hamas terrorists, Muhi A-Din Sharif. The sealing order was signed by the OC Home Front Commander and was issued to the family before dawn, when the police carried out a search of the home. Family members accused the police of ransacking the home but the police denied the allegation. The family indicated that they would petition the High Court of Justice against the order, which stated that their home would be demolished within 48 hours. In the Burka village, the security forces sealed the family home of Abed Sharnoubi, the suicide bomber responsible for the bombing of the No. 18 bus in Jerusalem on 3 March. In the village of Rafat (Samaria, northern West Bank), the IDF sealed the family home of Yehya Ayyash as well as his father's house and the houses of two of his brothers. In Dahariya, the IDF sealed the family home of Sufiyan Jabarin, the suicide bomber responsible for the bombing of the No. 26 bus in Ramot Eshkol. In total, 11 houses were sealed. In addition to the sealing of the houses, the security forces detained several relatives of the "terrorists", including two of Ayyash's brothers and his father. The OC Central Command, Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran, indicated that every potential suicide bomber had to know that his house would be destroyed and that the communities in which they lived would be punished. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 March)

174. On 5 March, the security forces demolished in Kafr Karyut (Nablus area) the family home of Anwar Labib who was responsible for the bombing of the No. 20 bus in Ramat Gan. (Ha'aretz, 6 March)

175. On 6 March, the IDF sealed the house in Abu Dis of Ayman Sidr, the "terrorist" who had planned a suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 7 March)

176. On 8 March, the IDF demolished the family home of Raed Shagnoubi (or Sharnoubi), the Hamas suicide bomber responsible for the bombing of the No. 18 bus in Jerusalem on 3 March. The army dynamited the two-story cement house in the village of Burka, near Nablus, instead of destroying it with a bulldozer. Before the demolition, neighbours were moved out of their homes and gathered on a hillside to witness the dynamiting. After the blast, villagers shouted "Allahu Akbar" and youths pelted the soldiers with stones. The soldiers quickly dispersed them and reimposed the curfew that had been in effect in the village since 5 March. During the demolition, a neighbouring house and its contents were completely destroyed and 22 other houses were damaged. On 12 March, it was reported that the IDF had compensated 20 families for the damage sustained by their houses while the owner of the house that was destroyed was said to be negotiating a rental agreement until a new house could be built for him at Israel's expense. (Ha'aretz, 10 and 15 March; Jerusalem Post, 10 and 12 March)

177. On 8 March, it was reported that the Israeli authorities had sealed two houses in the Fawar refugee camp that belonged to Ibrahim Sarahneh and Majdi Abu Wardeh, the perpetrators of the suicide bomb attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

178. On 10 March, the Institute for Land and Water Establishment for Studies and Legal Services reported that the IDF had demolished the house inhabited by the Sha'nuni family, whose son Ra'ed was among the bombers who participated in recent suicide attacks. The house, however, did not belong to the Sha'nuni family but to Mohamed Odeh. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

179. On 14 March, IDF soldiers demolished the house of Yehya Ayyash in the village of Rafat, which is located near the Samarian bloc of settlements. The commander who supervised the demolition stated that no one would be allowed to rebuild on the site without a permit from the Civil Administration. Residents who had gathered at the site of the demolition claimed that the house of Baruch Goldstein who perpetrated the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) massacre should also have been destroyed. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 15 March)

180. On 19 March, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) called on the Prime Minister to abandon the policy of demolishing the family homes of "terrorists". ACRI claimed that the punishment of entire families for their children's acts of "terrorism" constituted a true and unjust violation of human rights and was against universal values and international law that was in force in the territories under Israel's control. ACRI claimed further that the demolition of houses did not represent a real solution to the threat of terror but could increase the hatred of the residents of the territories towards Israel. (Ha'aretz, 20 March)

181. On 19 March, the Israeli High Court authorized the destruction of seven Palestinian houses belonging to Hamas activists. The Court rejected the petitions submitted by the house owners. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

182. On 20 March, IDF troops evacuated from their homes all the residents of the Fawar refugee camp and gathered them on a nearby hill to watch the demolition of the family home of Ibrahim Sarahneh, the suicide bomber who had carried out the attack in Ashkelon three weeks before. When the explosives experts blew up the

house, residents began screaming curses and shouting "Allahu Akbar", while angry youths hurled stones at soldiers who responded by firing live ammunition in the air and rubber bullets at the stone-throwers. A bulldozer then levelled all traces of the cement house. In Beit Hanina, the army demolished the house of Muhi Sharif who was said to be the third most wanted fugitive in the West Bank. Dozens of policemen stood guard near the house as bulldozers tore it down after the family was given several hours' notice to remove their belongings. The home was sealed some two weeks prior to the demolition and the family had been living in a tent outside the house since then, waiting for a High Court ruling on their petition against the demolition, which was rejected. In the Al Bourji village, the army demolished the family home of Abdel Majid Dodin, who had helped the suicide bomber who blew himself up on the No. 26 bus in Jerusalem in August 1995. Dodin was reportedly serving a 12-year prison sentence in a PNA jail. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 March)

183. On 20 March, the IDF demolished three houses in Jerusalem and Hebron. The first, located in the Fawar refugee camp, belonged to the family of Ibrahim Sarahneh, one of the suicide bombers involved in the recent bus bombings. However, the bulldozers could not reach the second house, which belonged to Majdi Abu Wardeh, because of the narrow alleys that lead to it. The house of Mihydeddin Sharif, considered by the Israeli authorities to be the heir of the Hamas activist Yihya Ayyash, was destroyed in the Beit Hanina a neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The third house, in Bireh, a village close to Dura in the Hebron area, belonged to the family of Abdel Majid Dudein. Dudein was accused of taking part in Hamas military activities. The week before, the Israeli authorities blew up the house of Yihya Ayyash in the West Bank village of Rafat. In a related development, the Israeli authorities refrained from blowing up the house of Ayman Sidr who was accused of recruiting volunteers for planned bombings, because the second floor of the house did not belong to the accused. The first floor was filled with concrete and sealed off. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

184. On 21 March, the IDF demolished in Kafr Karyut the home of Labib Anwar Azem, the suicide bomber who blew himself up on the No. 20 bus in Ramat Gan in July 1995, killing six people and wounding 31. In the village of Dahariya, the IDF demolished the family home of Sufyian Jabarin who carried out the suicide attack on the No. 26 bus in Jerusalem in August 1995, in which four people were killed and more than 100 wounded. Deputy Defence Minister Ori Orr stated that the steps taken against the families of suicide bombers, who were lured into such acts by promises of martyrdom, were likely to deter potential suicide bombers in the future. Mr. Orr stated on army radio that a man who blows up a bus believing he will go to heaven has to know that his family could not just set up a mourners' tent and continue living its life as usual. Mr. Orr stated that he had learned from credible sources that a suicide bomber would be deterred from carrying out an attack if he knew that some members his family would be deported, their home destroyed and that they would cease living a normal life after he had decided to go to heaven. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 March)

185. On 22 March, the army demolished in the Fawar refugee camp the family home of Abu Wardeh who blew himself up on a bus in Jerusalem on 25 February, killing 25 people. Three other houses were damaged during the demolition and the IDF

declared that the owners would receive compensation. Wardeh's parents and his eight brothers and sisters used to live in the house before it was sealed. Two of his brothers were arrested on 4 March. The demolition of the house sparked off unrest in the camp, with youths throwing stones at soldiers. One stone-throwing youth was arrested. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

(ii) Imposition of curfews, sealing off or closing of areas

186. On 6 January, a total closure was imposed on the occupied territories as of midnight, as part of stricter security measures aimed at preventing Hamas suicide attacks to avenge the killing of Yihya Ayyash. The closure was lifted on 10 January. (Ha'aretz, 7 January; Jerusalem Post, 7 and 11 January)

187. On 15 January, the IDF declared Bethlehem a closed military zone after a shooting incident in which an Israeli was moderately injured. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 16 January)

188. On 16 January, the IDF imposed a curfew on the area of Beit Ummar, in the Gush Etzion region, and launched searches in a number of Arab villages following the killing of two Israeli soldiers in a "terrorist" attack south of Beit Ummar on the Jerusalem-Hebron road. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 January; also referred to in The Jerusalem Times, 19 January)

189. On 21 January, the closure imposed on the occupied territories in advance of the elections for the PNC was lifted. (Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

190. On 23 January, a partial curfew was imposed on the town of Hebron after gunfire was heard in the centre of town. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

191. On 28 January, the IDF lifted the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip in advance of the Ramadan Friday prayers on the Temple Mount. (Ha'aretz, 28 January)

192. On 12 February, the security authorities imposed a total closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip following warnings of imminent attacks to avenge the killing of Yehya Ayyash after the 40-day mourning period. Residents of Jericho were not allowed to go to other parts of the West Bank. An exception was made for holders of special permits, who were not allowed, however, to enter Jerusalem. The closure was lifted on 23 February. Senior military sources indicated that Palestinians entering Israel to work would be carefully searched and that the closure would be reimposed if necessary. (Ha'aretz, 13, 23 February; Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

193. On 12 February, the Israeli authorities decided to impose an indefinite closure of the occupied territories after Israel received information that members of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and the PFLP intended to drive a booby-trapped car into Jerusalem. This was the first closure imposed by the Israelis since the PNA took charge of parts of the territories. According to PNA President Yasser Arafat, the closure of the territories was estimated to cost the Authority $6 million in losses per day. (The Jerusalem Times, 16 February)

194. On 12 February, the Israeli authorities imposed an indefinite closure on the autonomous territories. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

195. On 22 February, the IDF imposed a closure on the Dahariya area after a soldier was slightly injured there during a stone-throwing incident. (Ha'aretz, 23 February).

196. On 23 February, it was reported that Israel had decided to extend the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the basis of information received by its intelligence services that the Islamic movements, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, intended to mount attacks inside Israel. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

197. On 26 February, a total closure was imposed on the territories in the immediate aftermath of two suicide bombing attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 February)

198. On 29 February, Israel slightly eased the closure imposed on the territories in the wake of the Jerusalem and Ashkelon suicide bombings by allowing goods from the Gaza Strip into Israel and the West Bank. Goods bound for the West Bank were transported by Palestinian trucks with an IDF and border police escort, while goods going to Israel were taken off Palestinian trucks at the Karni checkpoint and were loaded onto Israeli trucks, which then transported them to Israel. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 1 March)

199. On 1 March, the closure of the occupied territories was eased slightly to allow for the movement of patients, medical personnel, Palestinian VIPs and diplomats. An army spokesman stated that all permits were subjected to individual clearance by the security forces. (Jerusalem Post, 3 March)

200. On 5 March, an open-ended curfew was imposed on the Fawar refugee camp, the home of the two suicide bombers who perpetrated the attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon on 25 February. The imposition of the curfew was reportedly Israel's first clear response to the recent wave of "terrorist" bombings. The alleys of the camp, which houses 5,000 residents and is located south of Hebron, were empty as soldiers stood guard on rooftops and carried out searches of the residents' houses. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 5 March)

201. On 8 March, it was reported that the curfew imposed on the Fawar refugee camp five days earlier, following the last bus bombing, was being maintained. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

202. On 10 March, it was reported that the Israeli navy had imposed a total blockade on the Gaza coast in order to prevent suspected Islamic militants from fleeing by sea and to stop the smuggling of material into the coastal area of the Strip. Reuters reported that most fishermen stayed ashore, while those who ventured out to sea were fired at by the navy. (Jerusalem Post, 10 March)

203. On 11 March, a curfew was imposed on the village of Husan (Bethlehem area) when a battalion of combat engineers in full battle gear carried out searches in the village, arresting a number of suspected Hamas activists. At least two

other villages were placed under curfew during similar raids in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 March)

204. On 12 March, thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip took part in demonstrations against the closure of the occupied territories. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 March)

205. On 15 March, the IDF lifted the internal blockade it had imposed on Palestinian villages in the West Bank and allowed increased shipment of food and other supplies from Israel into the Gaza Strip. The IDF also announced that it would allow goods from the Gaza Strip to be exported through the port of Ashdod after security checks and under armed escort. However, Palestinians were still barred from entering Israel while the closure was maintained on five villages in Judea and Samaria (West Bank): Burka, Fawar, Karyut, Dahariya and Rafat. In an interview with Israel Radio, Interior Security Minister Moshe Shahal stated that further steps to ease the closure would not be taken as long as the security situation was not clear and as long as Israel was not certain that the Palestinian Authority had arrested the principal leaders of Hamas. (Ha'aretz, 17 March; Jerusalem Post, 17 and 18 March)

206. On 17 March, the IDF eased the closure of the occupied territories by allowing basic foodstuffs, textiles, cement and other raw materials into the Gaza Strip. For the first time since the closure, the army also allowed Gazans to start exporting goods. The spokesman for the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories stated, however, that the Karni freight crossing was operating under stricter security procedures, which sharply reduced the number of trucks allowed to pass into Israel. Fewer than 40 trucks were able to use the crossing, as compared with over 400 prior to the closure. (Ha'aretz, 18 March; Jerusalem Post, 18 and 19 March)

207. On 20 March, IDF troops in the West Bank imposed a curfew on villages in the Tulkarm area during a military operation there in which 35 Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists were rounded up. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 March)

208. On 21 March, scores of doctors and teachers from the West Bank demonstrated against the closure at roadblocks located at the entrance to Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 22 March)

209. On 22 March, the IDF imposed a curfew on the Fawar refugee camp after residents started to riot and throw stones at soldiers in protest against the demolition of a suicide bomber's family home. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

210. On 22 March, the Fawar refugee camp was still kept under curfew. The village of Burka, in the Nablus area, has also been under curfew for the third consecutive week. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

211. On 23 March, the IDF lifted for 12 hours the closure of the Fawar refugee camp in order to allow its residents to stock up on supplies. (Ha'aretz, 24 March)

212. On 24 March, Prime Minister Shimon Peres notified the Cabinet that the closure of the occupied territories would be extended as long as there were warnings of impending "terrorist" attacks and as long as the PNA did not track down wanted fugitives. Mr. Peres announced, however, that the closure would no longer extend to Palestinian fishermen, who fished off the Gaza coast. He also indicated that food and medicines would henceforth be allowed to enter the Gaza Strip without interruption. Environment Minister Yossi Sarid indicated that the closure should not be imposed comprehensively and that Palestinians who had a long proven record of non-violence should be allowed to enter Israel. He also stated that only Hamas could benefit from a situation of 70 per cent unemployment in the occupied territories. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 March)

213. On 27 March, a curfew was imposed on the villages of Abu Kash and Shkheida prior to an Israeli raid of the villages two days later. (Ha'aretz, 29 March)

214. On 28 March, the IDF imposed a curfew on three villages near the Bir Zeit University campus - Bir Zeit, Abu Qash and Abu Shekheidim - in order to arrest their residents. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 April)

(iii) Other forms of collective punishment

215. On 24 January, a source at the Centre for Civic Rights Studies stated that the Israeli Interior Office continued to confiscate the identity cards of wives of Jerusalem residents who live abroad. Under Israeli law, residents lose their identity cards if they leave the City for more than seven years. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

216. On 4 March, following two suicide bombings perpetrated by two residents of the Fawar refugee camp, all male residents of the camp were interrogated outdoors during the night and were made to sit in a courtyard under IDF guard until the morning. Some 30 residents were detained, including several youths aged 16 to 18 who told the soldiers that they were ready to carry out suicide bombing attacks. Part of the collective punishment inflicted on the camp was the imposition of a curfew and the decision not to issue to its residents permits to work in Israel for at least three months. The OC for the Hebron area stated that further harsh punitive measures would be taken against the residents of the camp, which he described as a hotbed of murderers and "terrorists". (Ha'aretz, 4 and 5 March; Jerusalem Post, 5 March)

217. On 5 March, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran announced that Israeli citizens as well the Egged and Dan company buses were prohibited from transporting Palestinians over into the Green Line. The measure, along with the establishing of a 350 kilometre long, 2 kilometre wide security belt separating Israel from the West Bank, was aimed at totally separating Israelis and Palestinians. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 March)

218. On 16 March, a group of some 40 Israeli left-wing activists and foreign nationals arrived at the Fawar refugee camp with food supplies following reports of food shortages in the camp. However, IDF soldiers who were stationed at a roadblock at the entrance to the camp prevented any supplies from entering the camp and some of the foodstuffs had to be smuggled in. A group of Christian peace activists announced subsequently that it would remain at the roadblock

until it was allowed to deliver the supplies. After several hours, the IDF finally agreed to allow the supplies into the camp. (Ha'aretz, 17 March)

219. On 19 March, employers at the Erez industrial zone in the northern part of the Gaza Strip closed their factories in protest against the army's decision to allow into the zone only labourers aged 30 and over who were employed by Israelis. Labourers employed at Palestinian factories and those working in the service industry (shops and warehouses that delivered food and medicines to Gaza) were not allowed to enter the area at all while Palestinian employers were authorized to enter, but not with their own vehicles. On 20 March, the IDF agreed to change the restrictions and allow all Palestinian labourers to return to their jobs. However, Palestinian employers were still barred from entering the zone with their own vehicles. (Ha'aretz, 20 and 21 March)

(c) Expulsions

220. On 7 March, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and B'tselem sent a letter to Prime Minister Shimon Peres in which they expressed their strong opposition to any intention to expel relatives of "terrorists", especially the family members of Yehya Ayyash. The Association claimed that not only was the expulsion of innocent people immoral but it also entailed unnecessary complications at the international level and was devoid of any security benefits. (Ha'aretz, 8 March)

221. On 20 March, it was reported that the Special Staff created to fight terrorism by suicide bombers had submitted its recommendations to the Prime Minister. These included the expulsion of Islamic Jihad and Hamas detainees, of members of the political wing of Hamas (including the heads of various Hamas associations, spokespersons and those involved in the transfer of funds to the movement) and of family members of suicide bombers, in particular first-degree relatives. (Ha'aretz, 20 March)

(d) Economic and social situation

222. On 3 January, it was reported that it was estimated that between 40 and 42 per cent of the Arab residents of Jerusalem lived below the poverty line. (Ha'aretz, 3 January)

223. On 5 January, it was reported that Israel had agreed to issue 170 licences to merchants from the Gaza Strip allowing them to enter Israel, the West Bank and Jerusalem in their cars. The permits will be valid for 24 hours, which is 12 hours longer than before. The Palestinian Minister of International Planning and Cooperation, Nabil Shaath, stated that Israel would increase the number of Palestinians allowed to work in Israel to 20,000. Israel also agreed for the first time to grant full freedom to Palestinians to export and import newspapers and other printed material without Israeli censorship. Shaath confirmed that the return of 120 families (1,400 persons) from Canada to Tal Sultan would begin immediately. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

224. On 6 February, the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics published the results of a new demographic survey conducted among 14,854 households in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (not including East Jerusalem). According to the findings,

16 per cent of West Bank and Gaza residents aged over 15 were illiterate. The illiteracy rate was particularly high among women (24 per cent). Only 82 per cent of the 6 to 18 year-olds attended school. Only 18 per cent of inhabitants had completed secondary education, while only 4 per cent held a B.A. or higher academic degree. The average age in Palestinian society was very low: 47 per cent of residents were aged 15 or under (19 per cent were up to 4 years of age, while 28 per cent were children aged five to 15). The survey showed that marriage within the family or the extended family (clan) was very common: 29 per cent of married couples in the territories were cousins and 49 per cent of couples belonged to the same clan. The Palestinian housing density was high: more than one person shared the same room in 91 per cent of Palestinian households. The average density per room was 7.8 in the Gaza Strip and 6.7 in the West Bank. The majority of Palestinians (82 per cent) owned their houses. Some 40 per cent of the residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip considered themselves refugees. (Ha'aretz, 7 February)

225. On 8 February, it was reported that according to a demographic survey conducted by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, the population of the Gaza Strip would double in the next 15 years, spurred by one of the world's highest birth rates. The head of the Bureau, Hassan Abu Libdeh, reported that Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip had an average of 7.44 children. Therefore, he expected Gaza's current population of 934,000 to double in 15 years. Mr. Libdeh also stated that the impoverished Gaza would not be able to sustain such demographic growth and warned that it would eventually explode. Despite such an alarming forecast, Palestinian officials were reportedly reluctant to advocate birth control on the grounds that the practice violated Islamic teachings. In addition, Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders had advocated a high birth rate for years as a weapon in their war of demographics against Israel. (Jerusalem Post, 8 February)

226. On 17 February, Mr. Nabil Shaath accused Israel of waging an economic war against the Palestinian self-rule areas, exploiting their economic agreement and attempting to damage the Palestinian economy and its independent development. At a press conference in Gaza, Mr. Shaath claimed that the peace accords with the Palestinians had opened to Israel many avenues of economic development as it had strengthened its ties with other countries. On the other hand, the Palestinians were faced with obstacles placed by Israel. According to Shaath, the economic war against the Palestinians had many facets. He accused Israel of constantly resorting to security measures such as the imposition of restrictions on the movement of trucks transporting merchandise between Israel and Gaza and between the Palestinian-controlled areas and Jordan and Egypt; the placing of obstacles in talks on the safe passages between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank; and causing delays in the development of a sea port and an airport. Mr. Shaath claimed that despite the enormous increase in the volume of goods and raw materials entering Gaza, only a few dozen trucks were allowed to leave the Strip and that transport was now being carried out by 2,000 Israeli trucks. He also indicated that while 50 Palestinian trucks had transported merchandise to and from Jordan prior to the Oslo Accords, only 15 were currently allowed to do so. With regard to the safe passages between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, he pointed out that Israel had added eight more conditions for their opening, which the Palestinian side had rejected. As an example, he stated that the Palestinians did not accept that Israel should have the right to stop

Palestinians on the safe passage roads unless they had committed an offence or a crime while travelling there. (Ha'aretz, 18 February)

227. On 22 February, a unit of Israeli soldiers raided a building site in Abu Dis in order to stop the construction of an UNRWA school. An UNRWA spokesman confirmed that a building permit for the school had been issued by the Israeli authorities in November 1995. The spokesman pointed out that the Israeli officials had intervened in an area that had been handed over to the PNA and was under Palestinian jurisdiction. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

228. On 23 February, some 60 members of the Meretz political party visited Hebron and met with its mayor, Mustafa Natshe, and several members of the PNC. Mr. Natshe complained about the confiscation of land for the construction of bypass roads; the continued closure of the town's wholesale market; demolition orders sent to residents over the previous months; and harassment by settlers. The Meretz party members promised to work on the reopening of the market as well as on the issue of several roads that were closed to Palestinian vehicles. They also expressed the hope that settlers would soon be evacuated from the town. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

229. On 28 February, it was reported that 5,000 residents lived in the El Fawar refugee camp, located south of the Hagai settlement. The camp was situated in a small area "B" enclave surrounded by area "C" (area "B" is under joint Israeli-Palestinian control, while area "C" is under Israeli control only.) The sewers were open and residents claim that they had no land left on which to even bury their dead. Walls were covered with slogans praising the assassinated Hamas bomb maker Yihya Ayyash. The type of Hamas slogans used clearly pointed to the influence of Hamas in the camp. One slogan read "The Islamic Resistance Movement commends to God the slaughterer of the Jews, martyr Yihya Ayyash". Another one read: "Revenge. Disciples of the Engineer". Residents of the camp were contemptuous of the peace process. They expressed no remorse for the suicide bombing attacks perpetrated in Jerusalem and Ashkelon by two of the camp's residents, saying that Israelis had killed many more Palestinians. The Reuters news agency reported expressions of joy among relatives and many others in the camp when a Hamas leaflet confirmed the martyrdom of the suicide bombers. "We are not accepting condolences, we are accepting congratulations", signs hanging in the bombers' family homes indicated. (Jerusalem Post, 28 February and 1 March)

230. On 28 February, it was reported that the Agriculture Ministry had banned the transport of agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip to Israel or the West Bank as part of the closure imposed on the territories. (Ha'aretz, 28 February)

231. On 11 March, the spokesman for the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories, Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor, stated that he had been misquoted when telling the Cabinet that the Gaza Strip was near starvation. The spokesman claimed that the situation in Gaza could be described as difficult to serious, and admitted that it could turn into starvation. (Ha'aretz, 11 March; Jerusalem Post, 12 March)

232. On 11 March, it was reported that all the factories and businesses in the Erez industrial zone had been closed since 2,000 Palestinian workers and 16

Palestinian employers had not been allowed into the area following the Tel Aviv bomb attack on 4 March. (Ha'aretz, 11 March)

233. On 11 March, it was reported that the majority of families in the Gaza Strip were compelled to live on an unvaried diet because of dwindling income of the residents resulting from the closure imposed on 13 February. Poverty also exposed residents to infections caused by polluted water since most families could not afford to buy purified water. In addition, health care workers feared that the health condition of babies, who were already suffering from malnutrition, would deteriorate further. (Ha'aretz, 11 March)

234. On 12 March, the Tel Aviv-based Physicians for Human Rights organization and the Union of Palestinian Health Committees stated that the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the restrictions imposed on movement between villages in the West Bank had already claimed several lives and was endangering many others. Unlike the situation prevailing during previous closures, cardiac and cancer patients were not allowed to enter Israel or East Jerusalem for treatment. Physicians for Human Rights received list of 24 such patients from Gaza whose treatment had been delayed for at least a week because of the closure. The Health Minister of the Palestinian Authority reported that the Israeli authorities had prevented a baby and a 16-year-old girl, both suffering from heart ailments, from going to Jordan for treatment. He also indicated that nine children from the West Bank and five from Gaza who suffered from kidney problems and needed dialysis in Israel were also prevented from leaving the territories. As residents of the territories were not allowed to enter East Jerusalem or Israel, numerous doctors could not come to work at the Makassed Hospital, the largest Palestinian hospital in East Jerusalem. For example, one cardiac patient had been in the hospital's intensive care unit for 10 days because there was no one to operate on him. According to the Health Minister of the Palestinian Authority, 60 per cent of medical personnel were barred from reaching their places of work. The Minister stated that the officer-in-charge of health matters at the Civil Administration in the West Bank had issued a number of permits to medical personnel and immunization teams but that soldiers did not accept them and prevented the persons from passing through the roadblocks. As a result, the teams had to circumvent the checkpoint to taking dangerous roads and 35 people had been arrested upon return for violating the closure. In addition, the PNA was not allowed to bring into Gaza or the West Bank vaccines for children and numerous hospitals lacked vital equipment and medicines. (Ha'aretz, 12 March)

235. On 12 and 13 March, the army allowed food supplies from Egypt and Israel to enter the Gaza Strip. Medicines were also allowed into the Strip through the Erez checkpoint. The decision to allow supplies into Gaza was made in view of the economic hardships suffered by the residents as a result of the closure. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 March)

236. On 13 March, Gazan merchants and manufacturers complained that the closure had disrupted production activities in most sectors in the Gaza Strip. They indicated that thousands of workers had lost their jobs in Gaza itself, in addition to some 20,000 Gazans who had lost their jobs in Israel. Owners of grocery shops reported that their losses were not due to a lack of supplies but rather to the fact that numerous residents had not received their salaries in

recent weeks and could not afford to buy basic foodstuffs. The closure also caused substantial losses in the agriculture sector since produce could not be exported to the West Bank or abroad. Palestinian Authority representatives demanded that Israel at least open the Rafah border crossing and allow the export of agricultural produce and flowers, 10 million of which had been stocked in refrigerating rooms over the past week. (Ha'aretz, 13 March)

237. On 15 March, it was reported that the closure imposed since 8 March on the self-rule areas had severely affected different sectors of society. More than 245 clinics were unable to provide Palestinians with health services owing to travel restrictions. Israel also prevented the distribution of medicines inside the Palestinian-ruled areas, including vaccines for children. According to the Director-General of the Fishing Industry, the restrictions imposed on the movement of Gaza fishermen had caused losses of $795,000. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

238. On 16 March, some 200 residents of Hebron took part in a demonstration against violence and the closure and in favour of peace. In three additional separate demonstrations, thousands of Gazan residents demonstrated against the continued closure of the occupied territories and the deteriorating economic situation in the autonomous areas. The demonstrators expressed support for the peace process and their opposition to any kind of violence or collective punishment. During a demonstration organized by the Gaza Labour Unions Association, a convoy of buses, 10 tractors with agricultural produce and other vehicles from Rafah who were joined by demonstrators from all of Gaza's refugee camps arrived at the Erez checkpoint where the farmers threw on the ground withered flowers and rotten strawberries and potatoes. At the end of the demonstration, which took place in front of the offices of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Territories, the Special Coordinator, Terje Larsen, made a statement warning that, if the closure continued as in the previous two weeks, Gaza's economy would collapse. Mr. Larsen told his audience that he had never been as worried about the economic situation in Gaza since he came to the Strip seven years ago. Mr. Larsen stated that without jobs or social and economic security for the Palestinian people, there could not be a true peace. He stated that closures inflicted suffering on hundreds of thousands of people damaged the economy and made people feel that peace was not approaching but growing more distant. According to the estimates of the Special Coordinator's Office, every day of closure brought Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank losses of $2.4 million in income and revenues because workers could not go to their jobs in Israel. An additional $1 million loss was due to the ban imposed on the export of agricultural produce. During the previous month, the Palestinian Authority's Treasury had incurred a loss of some $36 million in the form of value added tax and import taxes owing to the interrupted import of merchandise and raw materials from Israel, and a further loss of $10 million in income taxes from labourers who work in Israel. (Ha'aretz, 17 March)

239. On 17 March, the Cabinet rejected a proposal by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid to send Israeli inventory food supplies to Palestinians. (Jerusalem Post, 18 March)

240. On 18 March, it was reported that some 3,500 textile industry workers, 4,000 tile factory workers and the majority of the 18,000 construction workers

in the Gaza Strip were unemployed because of the interruption of imports of raw materials to the Strip. Several thousands of taxi and lorry drivers, 5,000 fishermen and thousands of agricultural labourers were also unemployed because of the closure. It was also reported that since Israel banned their export on 25 February, all the agricultural produce of the Gaza Strip, including flowers, strawberries, fruit and vegetables had been lying rotting in packing houses, storage depots and in the fields. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

241. On 19 March, an Israeli humanitarian mission on its way to Gaza to deliver food supplies and medicines for babies in the Strip decided to return back to Israel after being made to wait for four hours at the Erez checkpoint and after being treated in a humiliating manner by the security authorities. The representatives of the organization were prevented from entering the Strip. The mission intended to express constructive protest against the restrictions imposed on humanitarian and health matters. Dozens of residents, including cancer patients who needed to undergo chemotherapy, had been barred from going to Israel for the past three weeks. (Ha'aretz, 20 March)

242. On 19 March, the Israeli military authorities prevented the entry of a shipment of milk and medicine into the Gaza District. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

243. On 19 March, Israeli industrialists closed down their plants bordering the Gaza District to protest against the small number of Gazan labourers allowed to work in their plants. Some 1,000 labourers were granted permits to work in the Erez industrial park for the first time since Israel imposed a closure on the occupied territories on 25 February. Israel Radio announced that only 300 labourers, aged 35 and above, would be allowed in. In a separate development, it was reported that Israel would bring 40,000 workers from Thailand to replace Palestinian workers. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

244. On 21 March, the High Court of Justice issued an order to show cause, giving the State 45 days to explain its failure to ensure that indispensable Palestinian medical personnel were allowed to return to their jobs in hospitals in East Jerusalem even during a closure. The Court ruled in response to a petition filed by the Makassed Hospital, ACRI and Physicians for Human Rights. According to the petition, the four Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem had been virtually closed because most of their personnel had not been allowed to come to work. Approximately 65 per cent of personnel of Makassed Hospital lived in the occupied territories and had been prevented from coming to work for the past three weeks. The Hospital's surgeons and internal medicine specialists were not allowed to return to the Hospital at all. The reduced staff was working 24 hours a day and was said to be on the verge of collapse. In the Augusta Victoria Hospital, the children's ward and the premature babies' ward had to be closed for lack of doctors. According to the representing ACRI attorney, the situation posed a major threat to the lives of patients. (Ha'aretz, 19 and 22 March; Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

245. On 24 March, it was reported that the European Commission had approved a food aid package for Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The grant from the European Union's Humanitarian Office would be used to purchase 750 tons of wheat and other basic foodstuffs. EU also decided to give $611,000

to WFP in order to enable it to import other basic foodstuffs such as rice, sugar and additional wheat flour. (Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

246. On 27 March, diplomats of several countries urged Israel to ensure that goods and raw materials could enter the Gaza Strip regularly so that a United Nations-coordinated $100 million emergency package aimed at providing short-term employment assistance to the Palestinian community would not come to a standstill. According to Western diplomats, the Palestinian unemployment rate had increased since Israel had reduced by 90 per cent the 3,000 tons of cement normally allowed into Gaza every day, thus paralysing the construction industry, which employed some 23,000 persons. (Jerusalem Post, 28 March)

247. On 29 March, it was reported that senior PNA officials had claimed that Israeli announcements regarding the easing of the closure did not reflect the situation on the ground and were simply meant for propaganda purposes in the Israeli and international media. The officials, including the Authority's Ministers of Labour, Health, Education and Agriculture, stated that the amount of goods allowed through the Karni crossing into the Gaza Strip did not meet the demand for basic foodstuffs or raw materials such as cement and textiles. As a result of the restrictions, the textile and construction industries, which provided employment for the majority of the labourers in the Strip, were paralysed, throwing more than 50,000 residents out of work. In addition, Israel still prevented the bulk of Gaza's agricultural produce from being exported from Gaza. The Authority's Agriculture Minister stated that although the Israeli authorities had authorized the export of agricultural produce, only four trucks with 168,000 flowers (compared with one million on a normal day) and eight trucks with 105 tons of vegetables (compared with 1,000 tons on a normal day) were allowed to leave the Gaza Strip during the previous four days. As a direct consequence of the situation, prices in Gaza had decreased and many tons of produce were not picked, while prices at West Bank markets had increased tenfold. According to the Authority's Minister of Labour, 70 per cent of the total Palestinian work force was unemployed because of the closure. He voiced concern over the social implications of the situation. (Ha'aretz, 29 March)

248. On 30 March, the PNA called for the immediate convening of a session of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people. The Authority's Information Minister, Yasser Abed-Rabbo, underlined that the closure, the confiscation of land and the delays in the IDF redeployment in Hebron constituted a kind of declaration of war against the Palestinian people. According to Mr. Rabbo, the peace process no longer existed. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 31 March)

249. On 30 March, the President of the World Bank promised the Palestinian Authority $20 million in immediate aid to help it overcome the economic effects of the month-long Israeli closure of the occupied territories. The President, who met with Yasser Arafat in Gaza, stated that the emergency aid package would be in addition to another $70 million in aid which was awaiting the Bank's approval. (Jerusalem Post, 31 March)

(e) Other developments

250. On 24 January, it was reported that the Government of Israel had authorized Sheikh Abdul Hamid Sayagh, the elderly Chairman of the PNC, to return to his home in Jerusalem. The authorization came after an earlier announcement that he could only live in the territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The permission was described as a humanitarian gesture and was not meant to set a precedent. In a related development, Rassam Abu-Sharif, a former "terrorist" of the PFLP, was also allowed to return to Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post, 24 January)

251. On 27 February, the Hamas movement held an assembly at the Al-Najah University in Nablus to commemorate the death of the two suicide bombers who had carried out attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon on 25 February that had left 25 Israelis dead and 84 others wounded. (Jerusalem Post, 28 February)

252. On 9 March, Palestinians who had assisted Israel in obtaining intelligence information met in Beit She'an and called on the Government not to abandon them. The meeting was held in a hall in Beit She'an after a hotel owner in Nahariya withdrew his permission for the meeting to be held in his hotel. (Ha'aretz, 10 March)

253. On 17 March, the Jerusalem District Police closed down the Holy Land Assistance and Salvation Fund and its offices in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina. The closure order, which was signed by OC Zone of the Interior, stated that the fund was engaged, among other things, in supervising the transfer of funds to families of Hamas activists who had carried out attacks, were killed or imprisoned. In addition, the Fund was accused of transferring money to families whose homes had been demolished by the IDF. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

2. Measures affecting certain fundamental freedoms

(a) Freedom of movement

254. On 9 January, the principal EU observer of the elections for the PNC stated that the restrictions imposed by Israel on the freedom of movement could interfere with the election campaign. In a related development, Peace Watch reported that members of the Palestinian Central Election Commission and Palestinian monitors had been delayed for more than an hour at roadblocks at the entrance to Jerusalem, despite the fact that they were in possession of Israeli VIP passes. In response to the allegations, the spokesman for the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories stated that the fact that the Central Election Committee had issued permits to the 1,500 observers did not mean that the recipients were not a security risk. (Jerusalem Post, 10 January)

255. On 11 January, the Liaison Administration barred an Israeli lawyer who had been representing thousands of Palestinians in Israeli courts for some 20 years from entering the Gaza Strip. The lawyer reportedly arrived at the Erez checkpoint after the State Attorney's Office had assured her that she could enter Gaza at the invitation of the PNA and in accordance with the regulations.

An official representative of the Palestinian Security Committee came personally to meet the lawyer at the Coordination and Liaison Office, but to no avail. (Ha'aretz, 12 January)

256. On 24 January, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that Israel would increase the number of Palestinian workers allowed to cross the Green Line in order to help improve the economic situation in the territories. The number included 3,000 Palestinian workers from Hebron. (Jerusalem Post, 25 January)

257. On 28 January, the IDF lifted the restrictions imposed on the freedom of movement of West Bank residents prior to the Ramadan Friday prayers on the Temple Mount. (Ha'aretz, 28 January)

258. On 9 February, the security authorities banned residents of the territories from entering Israel in private vehicles following warnings that a car bomb might be smuggled into Israel from the Gaza Strip. No detainees' families were allowed to enter Israel. (Ha'aretz, 9 February)

259. On 11 February, it was reported that the security authorities had decided to allow workers from the territories aged 30 and over to enter Israel. Some 56,000 workers were said to have been allowed to enter Israel so far. (Ha'aretz, 11 February)

260. On 16 February, it was reported that Palestinian journalists were required to show Israeli government press cards before they were allowed to enter Jerusalem. Many journalists had been deprived of access to the City as a result of the practice. (The Jerusalem Times, 16 February)

261. On 5 March, the Israeli security forces imposed a blockade on 465 Arab villages in the West Bank and sealed off the cities under Palestinian self-rule, placing 1.2 million Palestinians under virtual siege. The IDF circulated leaflets stating that residents were prohibited from leaving their villages. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 March)

262. On 6 March, Physicians for Human Rights sent an urgent letter to Prime Minister Shimon Peres in which they cited several restrictions imposed on the freedom of movement that did not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. The letter cited the case of a Palestinian woman from Gaza who died as a result of the closure. Her doctors decided to send her for urgent treatment in Israel on 25 February. A permit to enter Israel was issued only on 27 February. The ambulance carrying her was made to wait five hours at the Erez checkpoint and the woman died when it reached the hospital. The Palestinian Authority's Health Minister indicated that for each such case, dozens of others went unreported. (Ha'aretz, 12 March)

263. On 9 March, a three-month-old Palestinian baby from Kalkiliya who was suffering from asthma died on his way to a hospital in Tulkarm when soldiers refused to allow the ambulance he was in to cross a checkpoint north of Kalkiliya. The ambulance returned to Kalkiliya after waiting at the roadblock for one and a half hours. Since the baby's condition deteriorated, he was taken to hospital through neighbouring villages, along a route with no roadblocks. When he arrived at the hospital, it was too late and it was impossible to save

his life. The same family had reportedly suffered a similar tragedy three years earlier when their two-year-old daughter had died for lack of treatment during a closure imposed on Kalkiliya. A Central Command source expressed regret at the tragedy but indicated that the family did not have the necessary permits to pass through the checkpoint. The source claimed that 'terrorists' used various methods, including disguises, in order to cross into Israel. (Ha'aretz, 12 March; Jerusalem Post, 13 March)

264. On 10 March, the PNA rejected an Israeli offer to issue permits that would allow Palestinians to commute between the villages and cities of the West Bank. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

265. On 11 March, Israel lifted the curfew imposed on West Bank villages on 5 March in order to allow Palestinians to stock up on food. The curfew was lifted for 12 hours, starting at 6 a.m., allowing Palestinians to move from village to village but still preventing them from entering Israel. (Ha'aretz, 11 and 12 March; Jerusalem Post, 12 March)

266. On 11 March, it was reported that the Gaza-based Gaza Centre for Rights and Law had published a list of 25 patients who were prevented from undergoing urgent treatment outside the Gaza Strip because of the closure. The list included three babies suffering from heart ailments. In addition, two elderly patients whose transfer to hospitals in Tel Aviv and Jordan was delayed died. (Ha'aretz, 11 March)

267. On 11 March, a Palestinian woman in labour who was being taken from Nahalin village to a hospital in Bethlehem gave birth there to twins who subsequently died when the vehicle she was in was delayed at an army roadblock. The woman's brother-in-law, Omar Zaid, stated that at 5.45 a.m. he had been asked to rush his brother's wife to a hospital when she entered labour. Since the IDF announced that the internal closure would be lifted between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. he did not expect any delays. Nevertheless, he asked his parents, aged 65 and 70, to join him in the hope that their presence would facilitate contact with IDF soldiers. When they arrived at an army roadblock at the entrance to Bethlehem at 6.10 a.m. the woman started to give birth to the first baby. Mr. Zaid stated that he asked the soldiers to clear the way or urgently call a military ambulance but they refused. He claimed that they were made to wait at the roadblock for about an hour during which they quarrelled with the soldiers. At around 7.15 a.m. the second baby was born. The family, who had lost their patience, ran through the roadblock and continued on their way to the hospital. They were delayed for a second time at a roadblock located at the exit to the village. By the time they reached the hospital, the two babies had died. The army, which opened an inquiry, stated that a preliminary investigation concluded that one of the babies had died at home before the woman reached the roadblock. Military sources indicated that the IDF was investigating whether the soldiers had not allowed the woman to pass the roadblock and whether this was linked to the death of the second baby. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 13 March)

268. On 12 March, the Allenby Bridge was closed until further notice. Israel also prevented Palestinians living abroad from returning to the West Bank, despite having the necessary documents. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

269. On 15 March, the IDF eased a number of restrictions arising from the closure such as allowing Palestinians to move freely within the territories. (Jerusalem Post, 18 March)

270. On 17 March, the IDF allowed some 1,000 labourers from Gaza to enter the Erez industrial zone. The labourers were subjected to long security checks, including body searches. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

271. On 18 March, it was reported that cancer patients, including children, were still prevented from leaving the Gaza Strip in order to undergo chemotherapy or dialysis. According to a report by the Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry, between 25 February and 14 March the Israeli authorities had accepted only 8 out of 98 requests regarding Palestinian patients who needed to undergo treatment in West Bank hospitals. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

272. On 18 March, it was reported that the passage of goods through the Karni checkpoint had been interrupted for several days after it was discovered that the suicide bomber who perpetrated the attack in Tel Aviv on 4 March had infiltrated into Israel through the checkpoint. (Ha'aretz, 18 March)

273. On 20 March, 250 doctors and nurses were allowed to enter the Augusta Victoria, Saint John and Makassed Hospitals in East Jerusalem. The decision to allow the medical staff to return to the hospitals came after ACRI and Physicians for Human Rights had filed a petition with the High Court of Justice demanding that medical personnel from the territories be allowed to enter East Jerusalem immediately. (Ha'aretz, 19 and 22 March)

274. On 23 March, the IDF authorized Palestinian labourers with work permits to return to their jobs in the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) and parts of the Jordan valley. The army spokesman stressed, however, that Palestinians were still barred from entering Israel. (Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

275. On 25 March, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid complained to the Cabinet that Palestinian patients were being denied entry for treatment. Mr. Sarid charged that he had raised the issue of medical treatment during the closure and had been assured numerous times that the issue was settled. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 25 March)

276. On 25 March, the IDF allowed a Palestinian resident from Saffa (Ramallah area) to enter Israel in order to stay with his nine-year-old daughter who was hospitalized in critical condition in Jerusalem and whose doctors believed she only had a few days left to live. The permit was issued several hours after ACRI had petitioned the High Court of Justice against a decision to allow only the mother to enter Jerusalem. In its appeal to the security authorities, ACRI explained that a delay in the issuing of a permit risked resulting in the father not being able to see his daughter alive. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 March)

277. On 31 March, Palestinian scouts from Bethlehem staged a demonstration at a checkpoint outside the town. They protested against the closure, which prevented them from participating as was their custom in the Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post, 1 April)

(b) Freedom of education

278. On 5 and 6 March, the IDF ordered the closure of six Hamas-affiliated institutions suspected of channelling funds for Hamas "terrorists". They included the Technical Institute and the Islamic College in Abu Dis, where the security authorities reportedly found a large amount of inflammatory material, in the Islamic College in Hebron, which military officials labelled a "greenhouse for terrorists", and the Hebron Polytechnic, the Islamic Charity Association and the Young Muslims Association. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 6 March)

279. On 7 March, the police closed the Society for Islamic Science and Culture in Jerusalem on suspicion that the institution was being used to channel funds for Hamas. Documents and computer equipment were also confiscated while the head of the Society, senior Hamas member Jamil Hamami, was believed to have fled Jerusalem in order to seek refuge in Ramallah. A police spokesman stated that the closure order had been signed in accordance with the 1948 Anti-Terror Act. Palestinian sources claimed, however, that the institution dealt solely with welfare and educational activities and that Mr. Hamami, while being a senior member of Hamas, was among the moderate personalities on whom both Israel and the Palestinian Authority had counted prior to the recent wave of attacks. (Jerusalem Post, 8 March)

280. On 8 March, it was reported that the Council of University Graduates had demanded that the Israeli authorities revoke the order to close down the Hebron University College of Engineering. The IDF raided the headquarters of the Islamic College of Science in Abu Dis as part of an Israeli decision to close down a series of Palestinian institutions. (The Jerusalem Times, 8 March)

281. On 11 March, the OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran ordered all Gazans currently studying at West Bank colleges and universities to report immediately to the Civil Liaison offices in order to register and be transported back to Gaza. Maj.-Gen. Biran stated that students who did not comply with the order would be considered illegal and would face the corresponding consequences. In addition, the army also demanded that the PNA expel Gazan students currently in areas under its control. According to a military source, the Authority had declined to do so. Biran stated that the measure was being taken because students from the Gaza Strip constituted the principal core group of Hamas activists on Palestinian campuses in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 March)

282. On 11 March, Maj.-Gen. Biran stated that Gazan students studying at West Bank universities should get in touch with the offices of the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committees in order to register prior to being sent home. Biran added that those who did not abide by the order would be breaking the law and would be considered illegally residing in the West Bank. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

283. On 15 March, it was reported that the IDF had raided the Hebron University and Hebron Polytechnic and closed them down after a search. In a separate development, the IDF closed down the headquarters of the Centre for Islamic Culture and Sciences in the Dhahiyet Al Barid area north of Jerusalem. The

Israeli authorities claimed that the Centre received funds from Hamas. (The Jerusalem Times, 15 March)

284. On 18 March, a statement by the Palestinian Teachers' Union confirmed that the Israeli siege of the self-rule areas had had a negative effect on the educational process. The statement added that more than 700,000 students and over 24,000 teachers could not reach their classes as a result of the closure. The ban affected in particular schools in Jerusalem, where the educational system was on the brink of collapse. (The Jerusalem Times, 22 March)

285. On 28 March, the security forces rounded up between 371 and 376 Palestinians, most of them students from Gaza, during an extensive military operation in three villages located north of Ramallah. The army stated that the operation was aimed at rounding up suspected "terrorists" and students from the Gaza Strip, whose presence in the West Bank had been declared illegal following the recent wave of suicide bombings. Under the cover of darkness, security forces, including paratroopers, undercover units and policemen swept through student dormitories and private homes in Bir Zeit and the villages of Abu Kish and Shakheida, banging on doors and dragging suspects outside. Those arrested were taken blindfolded to a football field in Bir Zeit where they were questioned about suspected links with Islamic militants. Hundreds of students and youths staged a demonstration near the Israel-PLO Liaison Office near Ramallah to protest against the raid, which was said to have been the largest since the IDF had begun to share control over most Arab villages with the Palestinian Police. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 29 March)

286. On 28 March, the IDF raided some 50 apartments in three villages surrounding the Bir Zeit University campus - Bir Zeit, Abu Qash and Abu Shekheidim. Soldiers broke furniture and scattered belongings on the floor. Some 370 residents were arrested, including 280 Bir Zeit University students. The students were reportedly separated from other residents of the area before being taken to an Israeli base in Beitunia. They remained tied and blindfolded for up to 13 hours, waiting to be interrogated. By the evening, only 15 out of the 280 were released. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 April)

(c) Freedom of religion

287. On 4 January, the IDF announced that the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) would be closed to both Muslims and Jews from 7 January to 12 January. The IDF spokesman stated that the shrine would be closed for security and logistical reasons. It was reported that the Cave of the Patriarchs had last been closed for a week in September. (Jerusalem Post, 5 January)

288. On 25 January, Prime Minister and Defence Minister Shimon Peres authorized, on the recommendation of the security authorities, the imposition of a closure on the Gaza Strip and restrictions on the movement of West Bank residents in order to prevent a massive entry of Palestinians into Jerusalem for the first Friday prayers of Ramadan at the Temple Mount. Security sources reported that, according to the decision, a closure would be imposed on the Gaza Strip and its residents would not be allowed to come to Jerusalem. In the case of the West Bank, only men aged over 30 would be allowed into the City. The decision is said to have been taken following intelligence reports about the possibility

that elements within Hamas might try to carry out an attack in Jerusalem in order to avenge the killing of Yahya Ayyash. (Ha'aretz, 26 January)

289. On 26 January, more than 160,000 Muslim worshippers took part in the first Friday prayers of Ramadan at the Temple Mount. Hundreds of police and border police were deployed at the entrance to the Mount, in the Old City and in other parts of East Jerusalem. At the entrance to the Temple Mount, policemen took identity cards from young worshippers who seemed suspicious and retained them until the end of the prayers. Worshippers included the residents of East Jerusalem, the Muslim citizens of Israel and West Bank residents aged over 30 who were in possession of a permit to enter Israel. Residents of the Gaza Strip were not allowed to come to Jerusalem. Thousands of West Bank residents who had arrived at the roadblocks located at the entrance to Jerusalem were sent back to their homes because they did not fulfil the conditions required to enter the City. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 28 January)

290. On 26 January, all the prayer halls at the Cave of the Patriarchs were reserved only for Muslim worshippers, from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. (Ha'aretz, 26 January)

291. On 2 February, between 200,000 and 220,000 Muslims from East Jerusalem and the West Bank took part in the second Friday prayers of Ramadan at the Temple Mount, as thousands of policemen and border policemen were deployed in the City. Only West Bank residents aged over 30 and in possession of a permit to enter Israel were allowed to enter Jerusalem. Thousands of other residents who did not meet the requirements arrived at roadblocks located at the entrance to the City but were not allowed in. Numerous residents complained to the soldiers that they were preventing them from observing a religious commandment. The security authorities stated that the restrictions imposed on the number of worshippers allowed to enter the Temple Mount allowed for better control of the situation. They indicated that they had received warnings of an imminent attack and disturbances. Senior Palestinian Authority officials claimed, however, that there was no security justification for the restrictions, which they described as a political measure affecting the freedom of religion. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 4 February)

292. On 5 February, an Israeli military order was issued to close down the Muslim Theologians' Society in Hebron until 1 April. (The Jerusalem Times, 9 February)

293. On 9 February, between 240,000 and 290,000 Muslims prayed peacefully at the Temple Mount during the third Friday of Ramadan as border police and police units were deployed on the Mount and its surroundings in order to prevent disturbances. The army prohibited male residents of the West Bank aged under 30 from entering Jerusalem in order to reduce the chances of incitement at the mass prayers. Unlike the previous two Fridays of Ramadan, residents of the Gaza Strip were allowed to enter Jerusalem in accordance with the same criteria that had been established for West Bank residents. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 11 February)

294. On 15 February, the IDF partly lifted the closure imposed on the territories and allowed the residents of the West Bank to come to Jerusalem to

pray at the Temple Mount. Men had to be aged over 30 while no age limit was established for women. Both men and women had to be in possession of a valid permit to enter Israel. (Ha'aretz, 16 February)

295. On 16 February, over 300,000 Muslim worshippers came to Jerusalem for the last Friday prayers of Ramadan. Tight security measures were taken throughout the City. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 18 February)

(d) Freedom of expression

296. On 10 January, it was reported that fewer than 5,000 out of the 45,000 eligible Palestinian voters in Jerusalem would be allowed to vote in the City in the upcoming Palestinian elections because of Israel's refusal to open additional polling stations in the City. Voters would therefore have to travel to polling stations outside the City on election day, 20 January. Palestinian Authority officials charged that the limitations on voting were part of a general Israeli crackdown on the campaign and election activities in the City. The Jerusalem District Office head of the Central Election Commission, Anan Abu Mazir, indicated that Israel had banned outdoor rallies in Jerusalem while indoor rallies required prior permission from the police. Mr. Mazir also accused the police of tearing down campaign posters. (Jerusalem Post, 10 January)

297. On 12 January, four Palestinians were arrested for putting up election campaign posters in unauthorized locations in the Beit Safafa neighbourhood of Jerusalem. In a separate incident, candidates Hanan Ashrawi and Zahira Kamal were barred from entering Jerusalem when they refused to remove campaign posters from their vehicles. (Jerusalem Post, 14 January)

298. On 13 January, border policemen dispersed a campaign rally in East Jerusalem, forcing the supporters of candidate Ahmad Qurei to enter the YMCA building. A campaign parade for Qurei starting from Shuafat and led by 10 Palestinian horsemen was also dispersed. Campaigning in Jerusalem for the Palestinian Council elections was said to be strictly limited to indoor meetings. The placing of campaign posters was restricted to 35 locations. (Ha'aretz, 15 January; Jerusalem Post, 14 and 15 January)

299. On 14 January, the Israeli police prevented candidates for the Palestinian Council from entering Jerusalem with campaign posters on their vehicles. In one case, a candidate was taken for questioning to the Russian Compound when he refused to remove his campaign poster from his vehicle. (Ha'aretz, 15 January)

300. On 14 January, the High Court of Justice rejected two petitions by three Likud activists against voting in Jerusalem for the Palestinian elections, stating that this did not infringe upon Israeli sovereignty in the City. The Justices stated that the very fact that the Palestinian Authority had required Israeli permits to set up the polling stations confirmed the fact of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. Furthermore, they noted that the polling stations in East Jerusalem did not contain actual ballot boxes, but were rather collection points for ballots, which would be forwarded to the Authority for counting. (Jerusalem Post, 15 January)

301. On 18 January, a confrontation erupted between Palestinians and IDF soldiers in Hebron when soldiers injured and tried to detain a Palestinian photographer attending a demonstration demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners. (Ha'aretz, 19 January)

302. On 20 January, voting for the Palestinian Council in East Jerusalem took place in five post offices under heavy security guard. At the close of the vote the Israeli postal authorities transferred the voting papers to the Palestinian Election Committee in Abu Dis. The Jerusalem District Postal Service chief reported that 30 per cent of the persons eligible to cast their votes in the post offices had done so. Palestinians reported that the deployment of thousands of policemen and border policemen in East Jerusalem had deterred numerous voters from casting their votes. Faisal Husseini complained that the large number of security forces deployed gave people the impression of going to a police station or to a military base rather than to vote. The EU observer, the British MP Sir Russell Johnson, stated that he had failed to understand why such numerous forces were required in view of the fact that voters had behaved very well. In one incident, three Palestinian observers who had arrived at the Salah A-Din post office to monitor the vote were taken for questioning to the Russian Compound on the grounds that they were wearing unauthorized badges on their sleeves. Senior international observer former United States President Jimmy Carter called for their immediate release and declared that Israel was intentionally preventing the Palestinians from conducting the election process. He stated that Israel was frightening voters and trying to reduce the turnout in East Jerusalem. The majority of some 49,000 eligible voters in Jerusalem were obliged to use the transportation organized by the PNA to villages located outside the City's municipal boundaries in order to vote, since only 4,400 residents, mostly from the Old City, were allowed to vote in Jerusalem itself. One bus driver reported that although the buses had waited for voters throughout the day, few passengers had arrived. He explained that numerous residents feared that Israel would invalidate their Israeli identity cards if they voted. Others decided not to take part in the election in order to protest against the fact that they had to travel to Abu Dis to vote. According to several complaints, the Israeli security forces also prevented residents from going through roadblocks in order to vote outside the City. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 21 January)

303. On 20 January, Palestinian officials accused the OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran of insulting Col. Rivhi Arafat, the Palestinian head of the Security Coordinating Committee. The incident reportedly occurred when Biran went to the Committee's office to hear a report on how the elections were progressing. When Arafat began to speak about the presence of border policemen near voting stations in East Jerusalem, Biran allegedly interrupted, saying "Keep quiet, that's none of your business". However, when Arafat continued with his report and mentioned Jerusalem again, Biran allegedly said: "Stop your political games". Biran denied the allegations, stating that he had calmly pointed out to Arafat that his mandate did not include Jerusalem. He added that when the issue was raised again, he had told Arafat that he would have to interrupt to stop him because the City was not a subject for discussion. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 22 January)

304. On 30 January, the Israeli Internal Security Office prevented the holding of an exhibition of paintings by Arab artists because it was sponsored by the Palestinian National Authority. The Israelis do not allow official events sponsored by the PNA to take place in Jerusalem. The event was organized in conjunction with the French Cultural Centre in Jerusalem. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

305. On 6 March, the police prevented Palestinian Authority notables from holding a press conference in Orient House on the grounds that the Oslo Accords forbade the Authority from carrying out its activities in Jerusalem. Dozens of policemen surrounded Orient House an hour before the press conference, closing roads and preventing anyone from approaching the PLO headquarters. An agreement was eventually reached whereby Faisal Husseini was allowed to hold a press conference alone after his pledging that the leaders of the Authority who are not from Jerusalem would not attend the press conference, as originally planned. Hanan Ashrawi, recently elected to the Palestinian Council, who was one of the persons who was supposed to attend the press conference, which was organized to condemn the recent attack, stated that it was scandalous that Palestinians were prevented from entering a Palestinian institution in the heart of Palestinian Jerusalem. She pointed out that the behaviour of the police only contributed to increasing the violence. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 7 March)

306. On 22 March, the police prevented the holding of a conference entitled "Palestinian Jerusalem on the Eve of the Final Status Negotiations". The conference, organized by the Alternative Information Centre (AIC), was scheduled to take place at the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem but was cancelled because of the participants' alleged connection with the PNA. The Director of AIC criticized the police and accused them of acting in bad faith by informing him of the order only on the morning the conference was to be held and giving him no time to inform the participants about the cancellation. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 24 March)

307. On 27 March, dozens of Palestinian journalists demonstrated in front of the A-Ram checkpoint against the continued closure of the occupied territories, which prevented journalists from the West Bank to enter Israel, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The journalists, who were from Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus and East Jerusalem, waved banners reading "Peace needs freedom of the press, and freedom of the press needs freedom of movement". (Ha'aretz, 28 March)

3. Information on settlers' activities affecting the civilian population

308. On 16 January, a Kach activist reported that tyres had been slashed on several Arab-owned cars in Hebron in retaliation for the killing of two Israeli soldiers on the Jerusalem-Hebron road a day earlier. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 17 January)

309. On 20 January, settlers beat six Palestinians and smashed car windows in Hebron after a Jewish girl was stabbed by an Arab youth in the centre of the town. Several Kach activists also beat Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem. Some of the activists tried to attack Faisal Husseini, but were pushed away by

his bodyguards. The activists caused damage to Arab property during a confrontation that broke out thereafter. The Jerusalem District Police spokesman reported that four Jews and six Arabs had been detained in connection with the incident. In a separate incident in East Jerusalem, the police detained two religious youths after they had sprayed a Palestinian-owned shop. In the vicinity of the Jaffa Gate, the police apprehended a Jewish youth distributing leaflets calling on Palestinians not to take part in the elections and warning them that if the did, they would lose their Israeli identity cards. (Ha'aretz, 21 January)

310. On 23 January, it was reported that the Zu Artzenu ("This is our country") movement had begun posting armed patrols along the Gush Etzion-Jerusalem-Bethlehem road in order to spot presence on the road and provide "security" for Jewish travellers. In a comment on the report, the Samaria and Judea District Police spokesman stated that the police were not aware of the presence of any armed Jewish patrols in the territories besides those sent by the IDF. He indicated that the police would not tolerate the creation of private militias. (Jerusalem Post, 23 January)

311. On 4 February, an Israeli settler opened fire at and seriously injured Yasser Rajih, 16, in Al Lubon near Ramallah. Eyewitnesses reported that students were sitting near the school gate when the settler stopped his car, aimed his automatic rifle at the students and began shooting, without issuing a warning. A young boy was injured in a similar attack near Nablus. (The Jerusalem Times, 9 February)

312. On 22 February, a 26-year-old settler from Tapuah was arrested for alleged involvement in three incidents of shooting at Palestinians or Palestinian property from mid-1995 to early 1996. The settler was arrested after a ballistic test, which was carried out after he had been arrested for allegedly threatening Arab shepherds, linked his weapon to the one used in the three incidents that included shooting at solar water heaters in the village of Urif, shooting at a car in Burin and at a mosque in Halhoul. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

313. On 29 February, the Judea and Samaria (West Bank) District Police carried out searches in the Yitzhar settlement for students from the Joseph's Tomb Yeshiva (Nablus) who were suspected of involvement in a number of shooting attacks against Palestinians. Two IDF weapons were confiscated during the searches but the suspects and other settlers who were issued movement-restriction orders on 17 December 1995 could not be located. (Ha'aretz, 1 March)

314. On 6 March, it was reported that four gunmen had opened fire at the Palestinian police station in Tekoa village, south of Bethlehem. Windows were shattered and a vehicle was damaged in the shooting but no one was hurt. Eyewitnesses were quoted as saying that four settlers had opened fire at the station from a nearby olive grove and then fled to the adjacent settlement. (Ha'aretz, 8 March)

D. Treatment of detainees

(a) Measures concerning the release of detainees

315. On 5 January, Israeli security sources revealed that a release of prisoners would take place on 19 January but that the final list had not yet been approved. Twenty women were scheduled to be released during the third phase of the amnesty. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

316. On 9 January, the Israeli authorities released 900 prisoners. Only a few of the persons who were released were categorized as detainees. The majority were Palestinian labourers who were arrested within the Green Line with no work permit. Informed Palestinian sources stated that only 46 out of the 209 persons who arrived in the Gaza Strip were political prisoners affiliated with Hamas, the PFLP and the Islamic Jihad. The Palestinian Minister of International Planning and Cooperation, Nabil Shaath, announced earlier in the week that Israel had continued to refuse to release six women prisoners. Many women prisoners had completed their sentences. According to Palestinian sources, there were still 2,700 Palestinians still in Israeli jails. (The Jerusalem Times, 12 January)

317. On 15 January, 115 Palestinian prisoners, most of whom were convicted of common crimes, were released in a final round of releases before the Palestinian Council elections, as stipulated in the Oslo II Accords. This brought to 1,200 the number of detainees released over the past five days. Numerous Palestinian detainees who were released stated that they had been obliged to sign pledges not to leave the autonomous areas until the end of their sentences and to refrain from violence. Between 3,000 and 4,000 Palestinians were still said to be detained in Israeli detention facilities. Israel indicated that it would not release those prisoners with "Jewish blood on their hands". According to Nabil Shaath, the Palestinian Authority's Planning Minister and negotiator for prisoner releases, 240 Palestinians were imprisoned for killing Israelis, while 500 more were considered accomplices. In addition, several hundred were imprisoned for attempted murder. (Jerusalem Post, 10, 11 and 16 January)

(b) Other information concerning detainees

318. On 1 January, Defence for Children International (DFC) reported that dozens of Palestinian 16- and 17-year-olds were detained in military prisons together with adults despite being considered minors under international law. DFC spokesman Philip Veermon estimated that some 150 youths, most of whom were arrested in 1995, were detained without charge. He also indicated that in a recent case related to security, a 17-year-old Palestinian had been sentenced to five and a half years' imprisonment for stealing a car. He would not have the possibility of being rehabilitated, as was the case with Israeli youths convicted of similar offences, since there was no rehabilitation programme for Palestinian youths detained in Israel. In addition, Mr. Veermon stated that his organization was concerned as a result of a report published by B tselem showing widespread torture of prisoners by other prisoners at the Ketziot military camp, which pointed to the IDF's inability to protect prisoners under its jurisdiction. (Jerusalem Post, 2 January)

319. On 5 January, Abed Belbaysi, a Palestinian detainee from the Gaza Strip, appealed once again to the High Court of Justice against his continued torture by the GSS despite the Court's interim order which forbade it. In addition, he asked the Court to oblige the GSS to allow him to meet his lawyer. Belbaysi had reportedly been detained a month earlier at the Erez checkpoint and taken for interrogation to Ashkelon Prison. The GSS claimed that he was suspected of Islamic Jihad "terrorist" activities. (Ha'aretz, 7 February)

320. On 8 January, Member of Knesset (MK) Beni Tamkin, Chairman of the Knesset Subcommittee for Youth in Distress, stated that conditions of detention at the Russian Compound Prison were harsh and needed to undergo a complete change. Mr. Tamkin, who visited the detention centre with a delegation of Defence for Children International, stated that 20 young people aged between 13 and 18 were detained in the cell they had visited. It contained only 12 beds and 5 mattresses and no toilet paper could be found in the lavatories. The detainees complained of receiving an inadequate meal at 6 p.m. and of feeling ill at night. They also stated that they were beaten. (Ha'aretz, 9 January)

321. On 11 January, the High Court of Justice annulled an interim injunction against the use of physical force, including shaking, during the interrogation of Abed Belbaysi, who reportedly admitted to being a member of the Islamic Jihad and the mastermind behind the Beit Lid suicide bombing in January 1995. The Court issued its ruling after the State had explained that new intelligence reports it had obtained revealed that Belbaysi was in possession of additional information relating to the planning of serious attacks against Israelis in the near future. In their decision, the Justices stated that given the possibility that the information Belbaysi had could save lives, there was no justification for preventing the GSS from using any legal means of interrogation, including shaking. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 12 January)

322. On 11 January, 28 female Palestinian security prisoners began a hunger strike in Sharon Prison. They demanded to be released, together with the five female prisoners who had been pardoned by President Ezer Weizman and the OC Central Command. Three lawyers who came to meet the prisoners were denied access to the facility and had to leave after waiting outside for several hours. (Ha'aretz, 12 January)

323. On 13 January, some 20 members of the Association of Women for Female Political Prisoners staged a demonstration in front of Sharon Prison calling for the release of all the female Palestinian prisoners detained at the detention facility. The detainees were reportedly denied family visits. (Ha'aretz, 14 January)

324. On 15 January, Palestinian detainees at Ashkelon Prison reportedly joined in the hunger strike staged by the 28 female Palestinian prisoners demanding the release of 5 of their comrades whom Israel had refused to release on the grounds that they had killed Jews during "terrorist" attacks. (Jerusalem Post, 16 January)

325. On 16 January, the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners, a human rights organization, indicated that the conditions of detention of the women prisoners at Tel Mond Prison had deteriorated to dangerous levels as a result of

the daily harassment to which they were exposed. (The Jerusalem Times, 19 January)

326. On 18 January, a number of demonstrations demanding the release of Palestinian prisoners were staged in Hebron and Gaza. (Ha'aretz, 18 January)

327. On 19 January, it was reported that 25 Palestinian women prisoners had been on a hunger strike for eight days in protest against not being included in the present prisoner release programme. (The Jerusalem Times, 19 January)

328. On 1 February, a 21-year-old Hamas detainee, Abed A-Rahman Zid Al-Kilani, died in Megido Prison (see list). The Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners reported that Kilani had been placed under a six-month administrative detention order that was later commuted to five months. Two days after his scheduled release on 29 January, Kilani died in the prison. A Palestinian pathologist attending his autopsy at the Abu Kbir Forensic Institute reported that Kilani had died as a result of a nervous shock caused by severe torture by more than one person. The pathologist, Dr. Jalal Al Jabiri, the Director of the Palestinian Centre for Forensic Medicine, stated that he had detected injuries on the left side of the neck and bruises around the joints, which had apparently been caused by shackles and severe internal bleeding. The IDF spokesman who reported the death did not refer to the circumstances in which it occurred, indicating only that an investigation was under way. On 18 February, it was reported that investigators from the Mandela Institute who had visited the detention facility and gathered testimonies from other prisoners had arrived at the conclusion that Kilani was tortured by other prisoners and not by representatives of the prison authorities. (Ha'aretz, 4 and 18 February)

329. On 2 February, it was reported that Defence for Children International had estimated the real number of Palestinian children in Israeli detention to be double the number admitted by Israel, since its statistics did not include minors who carry Jerusalem identity cards. The organization claimed that in some cases, minors were arrested in a way similar to kidnapping. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

330. On 13 February, it was reported that the army would henceforth notify Palestinian families when it detained their relatives. The move, which amounted to a verdict by the High Court of Justice, followed a petition by ACRI and the Centre for the Defence of the Individual (CDI) claiming that the army had arrested dozens of Palestinians every month without informing their families. In order to locate the detainees, attorneys or organizations such as CDI had to call detention facilities throughout the country. According to the new arrangement, after arresting a person, the army would ask for their family's phone number and would call them immediately to say that the person had been arrested and to indicate where they were being held. If the family did not have a phone, the army would send a postcard to the address given by the detainee. The army would also phone a lawyer of the detainee's choice, should he request it. (Jerusalem Post, 13 February)

331. On 16 February, a 21-year-old Palestinian from Dura was killed by his Israeli interrogators at the Meggido Detention Centre. Adel Shahatit was sentenced to 20 months in prison for being an active member of the Hamas

movement. The Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners stated that another Palestinian detainee, Abdul Rahim Kilani, had also been killed in prison earlier in the month. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

332. On 18 February, it was reported that a 21-year-old Hamas detainee had died (see list) a week earlier in Megido Prison, in unclear circumstances. News of his death was broken to the family by the IDF, which provided no further details. According to the family, the youth was in good health. On 16 February, the family was informed that an autopsy had been performed, without any representative attending on its behalf. The Director of the Palestinian Centre for Forensic Medicine, Dr. Jalal Al Jabiri, told the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners that the Abu Kbir Forensic Institute had informed him that the detainee had died in circumstances similar to those which had led to the death of another detainee on 1 February. (Ha'aretz, 18 February)

333. On 24 February, a number of Israelis and Palestinians staged joint demonstrations in front of Sharon Prison calling for the release of all 28 female prisoners incarcerated at the facility. Twenty-five prisoners refused to be released as an act of solidarity with the remaining four prisoners whom Israeli President Ezer Weizman had decided not to pardon because of their involvement in "terrorist" attacks. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

334. On 7 March, it was reported that lawyer André Rosenthal had lodged a complaint with the department to investigate the police within the Ministry of Justice, charging that following the bus bombing attack in Jerusalem on 3 March and the Tel Aviv attack on 4 March, a group of policemen had severely beaten the detainees in the Russian Compound detention centre in Jerusalem. The lawyer attached to the complaint an affidavit by one of the detainees who claimed that in the morning of the day after the second attack on the No. 18 bus in Jerusalem, a group of policemen had beaten him and other detainees. The detainee stated that the policemen beat him with their batons all over the body, including on the genitals. They also threw him to the ground and stepped on his ribs. He was later taken together with other detainees to the courtyard where he was ordered to take off his shirt and was kicked in the stomach. The detainee related that they were beaten again after the Tel Aviv attack. Of the 16 detainees who were beaten, he was the only one to be taken to a paramedic, although several other detainees also needed medical treatment. (Ha'aretz, 7 March)

335. On 14 March, the High Court of Justice issued an interim order prohibiting the GSS from using force during the interrogation of a Hamas activist from Hebron pending the hearing of his appeal. The detainee, who was arrested during the recent wave of attacks, claimed that interrogators had subjected him to "shaking" and sleep deprivation. Before being shaken he was put on a small stool with his hands tied behind his back, his legs tied as well and with a sack placed on his head. He also claimed that on one occasion, an interrogator banged his head against a table immediately after shaking him. In addition, he was threatened that his fate would be similar to that of Abed Harizat who died from "shaking" during GSS interrogation and that he would leave the interrogation chambers in a wheelchair. The detainee's lawyer indicated in his appeal that the detainee had been interrogated a week after being arrested,

which proved that there was no urgency that could have justified such violent interrogation methods. (Ha'aretz, 15 March)

336. On 20 March, it was reported that the Centre for the Defence of the Individual had appealed to the High Court of Justice to order the GSS to enable four Hamas activists from Hebron to meet with their lawyer, André Rosenthal. The detainees, who were arrested during the recent wave of attacks, were held in Sharon Prison and were issued orders prohibiting them from meeting a lawyer. On 18 March, lawyer André Rosenthal sent a letter to the State Attorney's Office in which he demanded to be allowed to meet with two other Hamas detainees detained in the Russian Compound. (Ha'aretz, 21 March)

337. On 21 March, the High Court of Justice again issued an interim order prohibiting the GSS from using force in the interrogation of a Hamas detainee from Hebron pending the hearing of his appeal. The Court also gave the GSS five days to explain why it was subjecting the detainee to sleep deprivation, the playing of loud music 24 hours a day and holding him in a painful position with his hands tied behind his back, his legs tied and with a sack placed over his head. The detainee's lawyer, André Rosenthal, from the Centre for the Defence of the Individual, claimed in the appeal that the GSS had used the methods cited above despite being aware that the detainee was suffering from a kidney ailment. (Ha'aretz, 21 March)

338. On 22 March, it was reported that six Hamas detainees from Hebron and the Fawar refugee camp who had been arrested during the recent wave of attacks had appealed to the High Court of Justice to rescind orders prohibiting them from meeting with a lawyer. Four of the detainees were reportedly held in the Russian Compound detention centre in Jerusalem while the other two were detained in Shikma Prison in Ashkelon. (Ha'aretz, 22 March)

339. On 24 March, it was reported that a Palestinian student from East Jerusalem who had been arrested after the recent wave of bomb attacks on suspicion of membership in Hamas had appealed to the High Court of Justice against his torture by GSS interrogators. The detainee, who was held in the Russian Compound detention centre, claimed that he was subjected to "shaking", sleep deprivation, was obliged to kneel for long periods of time and was held in a painful position called "Shabah", that is, on a small chair with his hands shackled behind his back, his legs tied and a sack placed over his head. The detainee claimed that during six days of interrogation he had slept less than 12 hours. He stated that during most of the interrogation he was held in the "Shabah" position while loud music was played 24 hours a day. (Ha'aretz, 24 March)

340. On 27 March, it was reported that Defence for Children International had demanded that the State Attorney take immediate action to improve the detention conditions or release of four Palestinian juveniles detained at the GSS interrogation centre in the Ashkelon Prison. The organization's lawyers claimed that the youths, aged 16 to 17, who had been arrested four weeks earlier, were detained in shameful conditions. An affidavit submitted by one of the lawyers who had visited the detainees stated that the youths were held 24 hours a day with eight other detainees in a cell measuring two and a half by four metres in which there were only seven mattresses covering the whole floor. In addition,

the detainees complained of insufficient food and stated that they had not been asked to provide a phone number so that their families could be informed of their arrest. (Ha'aretz, 27 March)

E. Annexation and settlement

341. On 1 January, three Palestinians from Al-Bira withdrew from the High Court of Justice a petition against the building of an additional section of the Ramallah bypass road. The Palestinians decided to withdraw their petition after the State had promised to reassess the need for the construction of the road in a year's time. (Jerusalem Post, 2 January)

342. On 3 January, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that a new settlement consisting of 1,100 housing units would be set up in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood in order to strengthen the chain of Jewish settlements in north-eastern Jerusalem. The new settlement would be linked to the Pisgat Zeev settlement, built on land belonging to Shufat landowners, and to the Neve Yaacov settlement, which was built on land belonging to Beit Hanina. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

343. On 4 January, it was reported that the IDF had completed the dismantling of the Neve Yaacov military base in northern Jerusalem. A new Jewish neighbourhood consisting of some 1,100 housing units was scheduled to be built on the land on which the base had been located and on adjacent land beyond the Green Line. Most of the land earmarked for the construction of the new neighbourhood, which was approved by the Jerusalem Planning and Construction Commission, was reportedly confiscated from Arab residents of the area during the 1990s and now belonged to the Land Administration. If completed, the new neighbourhood would create an uninterrupted series of Jewish neighbourhoods in Jerusalem. Some 11,000 additional housing units are under construction in the City, while the construction of numerous others is in the planning stage. Most housing construction was said to be located in the Pisgat Zeev and Shufat neighbourhoods located in the north of Jerusalem, beyond the Green Line. (Ha'aretz, 4 January)

344. On 7 January, it was reported that eight Palestinian landowners had appealed to the High Court of Justice in order to prevent the Government from confiscating their land in order to construct the Beit Shemen-Atarot and the Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem roads. The construction of the highways reportedly involved the confiscation of 1,600 dunums of land in the Beit Hanina, Bir Nabala, Eljadida and Kalandia area bordering northern Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 7 January)

345. On 8 January, residents of Shufat tried to stop bulldozers that had been sent by the Jerusalem Municipality from paving a road that stretches from their village to the adjacent area of Nabi Ya'acoub near Beit Hanina, in northern Jerusalem. The bulldozers had moved in despite a ruling by an Israeli District Court in favour of the villagers. The residents stated that if the road was completed, it would mean that 17 Arab houses would have to be demolished and 380 dunums of land confiscated. The Municipality demolished the mosque in Nabi Ya'acoub several days before in preparation for the building of the roads. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 January)

346. On 9 January, it was reported that Deputy Housing Minister Alex Goldfarb had intended to issue a directive allowing the habitation of empty government-owned houses in the settlements of Karnei Shomron (West Bank), Alei Sinai and Nisanit (both located in the northern Gaza Strip). Mr. Goldfarb stated that it was a waste of the taxpayers' money to keep the housing units empty and to have to pay for security guards to ensure that they were not vandalized. Hundreds of government-owned apartments in the three cited settlements were said to be empty because of the freeze imposed on housing in settlements. (Jerusalem Post, 10 January)

347. On 17 January, it was reported that the Kiryat Arba settlers had launched a campaign inviting the purchase or rental of apartments in the settlement at low prices. A spokesman for the Kiryat Arba Local Council stated that according to the Council's figures, some 66 new families had come to live in the settlement over the past year while 23 had left. The campaign was reportedly launched when a group of Kiryat Arba residents publicly requested government compensation if they left the settlement voluntarily. However, the Government made it clear that it did not intend to provide compensation to those who wanted to move out of the settlement at present. (Jerusalem Post, 17 January)

348. On 22 January, Palestinians and IDF soldiers clashed near Habal village, south of Kalkiliya, when the Palestinians tried to prevent the construction of a road and a fence around the adjacent Matan settlement. The protesters threw stones and bottles at a bulldozer carrying out ground-levelling work, injuring one soldier. Soldiers responded by firing rubber and plastic bullets at the protesters. Two Palestinians were wounded and two others arrested. (Jerusalem Post, 23 January)

349. On 24 January, the Jerusalem Municipality announced that an unprecedented NIS 60 million would be allocated for development projects in the Arab sections of Jerusalem in an attempt to strengthen Israeli control of the City. Deputy Mayor Shmuel Meir stated that the Municipality was fully aware that providing better services to Arab residents would convince them that they were better off under Israeli rule. He stated that it was the Municipality's obligation to ensure equality in funding if the City was to remain unified. The development budget for Jerusalem's Arab neighbourhoods stood at NIS 60.4 million, out of a total development budget of NIS 272 million. Arab neighbourhoods reportedly received less than NIS 10 million for development projects prior to Mayor Ehud Olmert's term of office. (Jerusalem Post, 25 January)

350. On 24 January, Prime Minister Shimon Peres promised the mayor of the Maaleh Adumim settlement that Israeli law would continue to be applied to the settlement as part of a final agreement with the Palestinians. The statement reportedly amounted to an annexation of the settlement to Israel. The mayor, Beni Kashriel, expressed great satisfaction at the statement indicating that it was of prime importance since 2,000 housing units were currently under construction in the settlement. (Ha'aretz, 25 January)

351. On 24 January, a Palestinian was injured in the head by rubber bullets fired by IDF when soldiers clashed with Palestinian villagers from Habla (Tulkarm area) who protested against the confiscation of their land for the construction of a "security" fence aimed at separating Jewish and Arab

localities. The protesters threw stones at IDF troops, police and border police and stood in the way of tractors carrying out work. An IDF officer was injured by stones thrown at him. The Palestinians left the site when numerous IDF and border police troops arrived on the scene and the work on the fence resumed. (Ha'aretz, 25 January)

352. On 24 January, Israeli bulldozers started levelling land in Hiblah, near Kalkiliya, in an attempt to build an electronic wall that would separate the towns of Tulkarm and Kalkiliya from the Green Line (Israel). The wall was to be built on a piece of land in Hiblah measuring 1.7 square kilometres that belonged to Palestinian residents. (The Jerusalem Times, 26 January)

353. On 25 January, the Meretz faction accused the Labour Party of striking a deal with the ultra-orthodox religious parties that would involve the construction of a new town in the territories. The town, which would provide new housing for the growing ultra-orthodox population, would be built in return for the parties' abstention in no-confidence votes. Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer stated that he was awaiting a speedy Cabinet approval for the building of the new town, to be called Matityahu, which would be constructed next to Kiryat Sefer, an ultra-orthodox town located immediately across the Green Line. Some 13,000 housing units were scheduled to be built in the town during the first stage of construction. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 26 January)

354. On 28 January, it was reported that Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated at a convention of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America that Jerusalem would not be on the negotiating table with the Palestinians at any time in the future. (Jerusalem Post, 28 January)

355. On 29 January, it was reported that the IDF was planning to build a new bypass in the territories. The road, which would entail new land confiscation, would link the Har Gilo area to Har Homa. It would run north to Bethlehem and Beit Jalah through Nahal Gilo. The Israeli Association for the Conservation of Nature sent letters to the OC Central Command and the aide to the Defence Minister voicing its opposition to the construction of the road, which it claimed would cause irreversible damage to the landscape and the environment, as was the case with the Bethlehem bypass. (Ha'aretz, 29 January)

356. On 29 January, Palestinian legal sources stated that since the beginning of the second phase of redeployment, the Israeli authorities had introduced significant changes in the committees that deal with land registration. The sources commented that the changes were meant to facilitate rulings in favour of settlers locked in disputes with Palestinians over ownership of thousands of dunums of land in the West Bank. The Israeli authorities replaced the Arab members of all committees with Israeli Jews, who are usually settlers. The headquarters of the Complaints Committee were relocated from the settlement of Beit El near Ramallah to the nearby Israeli army camp located near the Ofra settlement, which made it difficult for Palestinian landowners to reach the office. In a separate development, the Israeli State Attorney, Danny Kremer, submitted a petition to the Military Committee for Protests to close the file on land confiscations around the Bani Naim village in the Hebron area because the land belonged to area B on the Palestinian-Israeli redeployment maps. (The Jerusalem Times, 2 February)

357. On 11 February, the Palestinian authorities in Bethlehem started a protest campaign as rage was mounting among Palestinians over the construction of a long "security" wall outside Rachel's Tomb. According to a local Waqf ministry official, the wall was being built on Waqf-owned land and divided the main road leading to Jerusalem, creating serious difficulties for both traffic and pedestrians. Bethlehem's notables stated that the construction was stifling the town and damaging a holy Muslim site. The Mayor, Elias Freij, warned that the wall would have a negative impact on the town's economy and he firmly rejected claims by senior IDF officers who alleged that the construction was being carried out within the framework of the peace accord. He called upon the Israeli authorities to produce and publicly display such an accord and urged the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General to intervene. Col. Farouk Amin, the Commander of the Palestinian District Coordinating Office, noted that the Israelis had not built the road during 28 years of occupation and were doing so now just in order to give everyone a bad feeling about peace. On 29 February, it was reported that Israel had backed down from building a permanent wall more than two metres high and had settled for a 70 centimetres-high wall that would serve as a base for a temporary wall to be built during the few holidays when large numbers of Israelis came to visit the site. (Ha'aretz, 12 and 13 February; Jerusalem Post, 14, 16 and 29 February)

358. On 12 February, it was reported that the Government had approved the construction of five additional bypass roads in the West Bank, with the Civil Administration already issuing land confiscation orders to allow for the construction of the first road. The Bituniya bypass would pass through land belonging to several Arab villages. It would enable settlers from the Talmonim, Nahliel and Dolev settlements to have direct access south to Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 12 February)

359. On 15 February, hundreds of West Bank residents took part in demonstrations in six localities in the West Bank against Jewish settlements, the confiscation of Palestinian-owned land and the construction of bypass roads. The demonstrations, which were mostly peaceful, were organized by the Islamic Anti-Settlement Committee following mounting anger among the Palestinian public about recent announcements of large-scale land confiscation for the construction of additional bypass roads and about statements by senior Israeli officials concerning the future of settlements. Yasser Abed Rabbo, the PNA Information Minister and one of the Committee's leaders, warned that the continuation of settlement expansion in the territories would lead to the explosion of the peace process. Mr. Rabbo stated that there was a new wave of settlement activities in the territories, claiming that the situation could not have been worse had Ariel Sharon been in power. The demonstrations took place in the villages of Betuniya, Halhoul, Habla, Beit Furik and Shweika. In Shweika (Tulkarm area) residents protested against the confiscation of their land for the building of a fence aimed at separating the Tulkarm and Kalkiliya areas from the Kfar Sava area. In Hablah (Kalkiliya area), residents protested against Israel's intention to build a fence that would separate their village from the adjacent village of Matan within the Green Line, which is currently under construction. The residents claimed that their land had been confiscated for the construction of the fence. The protesters were dispersed by rubber bullets and tear-gas after ignoring army orders to leave the site. No injuries were reported. (Ha'aretz, 16 February)

360. On 19 February, Interior Minister Haim Ramon announced that he would approve the construction of 6,500 housing units in the new Har Homa settlement planned to be built in Jerusalem. The plans were reportedly approved by the District Planning and Construction Committee several months earlier and were passed on to Mr. Ramon for approval. The area where the settlement was to be built is located between Jerusalem, Bethlehem and three Arab villages. It was previously classified as a "green area". The plan stirred anger among Palestinians who claimed that if the area were to be used for building, it should be used for the construction of Arab housing. Faisal Husseini announced that Palestinians would demonstrate at the site and try to prevent the construction, as they had done with regard to Givat Hadagan near the Efrat settlement. (Jerusalem Post, 20 February)

361. On 19 February, Prime Minister Shimon Peres dismissed the Likud-Tsomet electoral theme that he would redivide Jerusalem with the word "chizbat", an old "Palmah" term used to depict a myth or bluff. Speaking at the weekly Labour Party meeting, he recalled Likud threats that Labour would give up the entire Golan Heights and stated that this had not happened and Jerusalem would not be divided again either. In a separate development, the Meretz faction in the Knesset decided to boycott the coalition meetings if Labour continued to support the construction of 6,300 housing units in the territories earmarked for ultra-orthodox Jews. (Jerusalem Post, 20 February)

362. On 21 February, the police and the IDF broke up a demonstration of Palestinians protesting against the transfer of three mobile homes from the centre to the outskirts of the Otniel settlement (Hebron area). It was one of several small-scale demonstrations that were staged over the previous two weeks against land expropriation and settlement expansion. (Jerusalem Post, 22 February)

363. On 21 February, Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated that the Government would take special care to prevent Palestinian Authority activities in Orient House in East Jerusalem. Mr. Peres claimed that such activities were against the peace accords and against the law. He also stated that "Jerusalem will not be Berlin". (Ha'aretz, 22 February)

364. On 22 February, Prime Minister Shimon Peres announced that no settlements would be dismantled under a final agreement with the Palestinians. Addressing a Labour Party meeting, Mr. Peres asserted that the Jordan river was Israel's security border and that no foreign army would be allowed to cross the Jordan valley. He stated that he did not see any need for the removal of any settlements, including those located in the Jordan valley. (Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

365. On 22 February, Palestinian politicians and clergymen meeting in Bethlehem called for an end to the construction of settlements and roads in the occupied territories. Among those present at the conference, which was chaired by the PNA Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, were Palestinian council members Hanan Ashrawi and Salah Taamari, Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and Mufti of Jerusalem Ikrimeh Sabri. Cartographer Khalil Tufakji claimed that 20,000 housing units had been built recently or were currently in the planning stages in the Greater Jerusalem area. He also stated that hundreds of kilometres of

bypass roads on expropriated Palestinian land separated and encircled Palestinian towns. A statement issued at the end of the conference called for a peaceful daily mass movement to block settlement activities. (Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

366. On 24 February, the Palestinian Council decided to take action at the highest international and Arab level in order to halt the confiscation of land and settlement activities in the West Bank. The Council's decision came after an announcement of further land confiscation for the construction of additional bypass roads in the West Bank and the Government of Israel's intention to allow construction in settlements to continue. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

367. On 24 February, the Israeli authorities notified the mukhtar of Irtah, in the Tulkarm area, that 110 dunums of village land had been confiscated in order to build a fence to separate the Green Line areas from the West Bank. The mukhtar stated that some 100 families depended on the land for their livelihood. (The Jerusalem Times, 23 February)

368. On 25 February, it was reported that the building of fences, cement walls and watch towers was part of a number of security measures to be implemented in the heart of Hebron in order to protect settlers after the IDF's redeployment in the town, which is scheduled to take place between 26 and 28 March. Under the redeployment agreement, the IDF would withdraw from most of Hebron but would remain in the parts of the town inhabited by Jews and would retain control over security in the area. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

369. On 25 February, it was reported that according to a report published by the Centre for Alternative Information, an Israeli-Palestinian association focusing on the protection of human rights in the territories, tens of thousands of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem who lived outside the municipal borders of the City faced the risk of having their identity cards confiscated. According to the report, human rights organizations and lawyers who dealt with the issue claimed that over the past four months numerous Palestinians who were living in the West Bank and wished to renew their Jerusalem identity cards had been told by the Interior Ministry to apply for a Palestinian Authority identity card. This policy was said to be against a 1995 statement by the Director of the Population Registry Office whereby the residents of East Jerusalem who lived in the West Bank would not have their identity cards invalidated. As an example of the new policy, the report cited the case of a Palestinian woman who moved with her husband to Ramallah in 1989 after having failed to find accommodation in Jerusalem. In 1995, she lost her identity card and was told by the Interior Ministry that she was not entitled to a new card on the grounds that she and her husband now lived in Ramallah. The report indicated further that while an appeal to the High Court of Justice against the confiscation of an identity card belonging to a Palestinian resident of East Jerusalem had a chance of being accepted in the past, this was not the case at present. The report pointed out that the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem previously had their identity cards invalidated after they had lived abroad for more than seven consecutive years. In addition, they were not allowed to return to Israel. However, the report indicated that such rules were seldom applied to Jerusalem residents who lived in the West Bank. (Ha'aretz, 25 February)

370. On 26 February, the IDF began constructing a security fence along the border near the towns of Tulkarm and Kalkiliya. The 22-kilometre-long fence was being built on land belonging to the residents of Hibla village. The wall will separate the village from the Matti settlement. (The Jerusalem Times, 1 March)

371. On 10 March, Palestinian leaders boycotted the opening of the first Israeli police station in East Jerusalem located in the post office building on the Salah a-Din Street outside the Old City. The police believed that while the opening of the station had political implications, it responded to a need of the City's Arab community. At the opening ceremony, Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal stated that Israel did not liberate Jerusalem in order to abandon it and pointed out that all sorts of suspicious groups, both nationalistic and criminal, had moved into East Jerusalem because of the vacuum created by the absence of an Israeli police station in East Jerusalem for 29 years. (Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, 11 March)

372. On 12 March, the Knesset Finance Committee announced that it would allocate part of the funds from the 1996 budget to improving infrastructure in East Jerusalem. The Committee also asked the Government to prepare a five-year plan aimed at closing the gap between the services provided in the eastern and western parts of the City. The Committee Chairman stated that providing equal services to all of the City's inhabitants was crucial for keeping the capital united under Israeli sovereignty. (Jerusalem Post, 13 March)

373. On 22 March, it was reported that six Palestinian land and property owners in northern Jerusalem had appealed to the High Court of Justice after the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court had rejected their appeal to cancel the plan to continue with the construction of the No. 1 road, which would link the French Hill and Neve Yaacov settlements. The Palestinians claimed that the approval of the plan had already dispossessed hundreds of families from Shufat and Beit Hanina of what remained of their property, the greater part of which had been confiscated over the past 20 years. (Ha'aretz, 22 March)

374. On 26 March, the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court issued an interim injunction prohibiting the approval of the controversial plan to build a Jewish neighbourhood at Har Homa in East Jerusalem. The court thus accepted an appeal by 29 landowners from Beit Sahur, Umm-Tuba and the 'Ir Shalem' Association. (Ha'aretz, 27 March)

375. On 30 March, hundreds of residents of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahur demonstrated against the construction of another 'security road', which, according to Palestinian estimates, would involve the confiscation of between 1,500 and 1,800 dunums of Palestinian-owned land. A three-hour general strike against the construction was also held in Bethlehem. The Bethlehem Committee for the Defence of Land charged that the road was intended to link the Gilo settlement with the planned Har Homa settlement, which borders Bethlehem. The IDF presented the confiscation orders a week earlier, stating that the road would be 5.3 kilometres long. A lawyer from the Land and Water Establishment for Studies and Legal Services who had examined the construction plan claimed, however, that the road would be some 7 kilometres long. He also pointed out that the road would prevent landowners from gaining access to an additional

8,000 dunums of land, which would be located on the other side of the road. (Ha'aretz, 31 March; Jerusalem Post, 22 and 31 March)

376. On 31 March, the second span of the French Hill overpass in Jerusalem was officially opened by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar. (Jerusalem Post, 1 April)

377. On 31 March, villagers from Silwad held a protest against the levelling of their land to make way for the paving of Route No. 60 on the Ramallah-Nablus road. Over 20 metres wide, the new road encroaches on the land of Silwad from the western side. Upon its completion, the road would cut the villagers off from their fields. Road 60 would also cut vertically across the West Bank, dividing it into two parts. (The Jerusalem Times, 5 April)

F. Information concerning the occupied Syrian Arab Golan

378. On 9 January, the Golan Residents Committee declared a state of emergency amid growing concern over the possibility of an agreement between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic that would require a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The Committee's spokesman issued a call to all those opposed to an Israeli pull-out to come to the Golan. The response to the call came almost entirely from both leaders of the opposition and the heads of the Third Way movement. (Jerusalem Post, 10 January)

379. On 13 February, pro-Syrian members of the Druze community held a news conference in Jerusalem to express their support for the Syrian position that Israel should withdraw from the Golan to the ceasefire lines existing on the eve of the Six Day War. (Jerusalem Post, 14 February)

380. On 14 February, a large number of nearly 800 policemen led by Northern Region Commander Amos Azani was deployed in the Druze villages of Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Buka'atha and Ein Kiniyeh as the Golan Druze observed a commercial strike and staged demonstrations to mark the fourteenth anniversary of their protest against the imposition of Israeli law on the Golan. Scores of people gathered on the Syrian side of the border on what is known as 'Shouting Hill'. They sang nationalist songs, shouted 'Next year in Syria' and made speeches, which were broadcast to their brethren in Majdal Shams through loudspeakers. The gatherings dispersed by the early afternoon and police withdrew from the villages. (Ha'aretz, 15 February; Jerusalem Post, 14 and 15 February)

381. On 22 February, Prime Minister Shimon Peres told a Labour Party meeting that he was seeking a mandate to negotiate with Damascus and that once a peace agreement had been reached, he would bring it to the people for a referendum. Mr. Peres claimed that a referendum presented the additional advantage of obliging the Government to negotiate an accord that the people would approve, an accord with security as well as political and economic substance. (Jerusalem Post, 23 February)

382. On 4 March, the Government suspended its peace negotiations with the Syrian Arab Republic following a suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv, stating that it

could not conduct peace talks amid terrorism at home. The talks were scheduled to resume in Maryland after a weekend break. (Jerusalem Post, 5 March)